



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana schools and communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Organic Association, and FoodCorps Montana. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemonth.org



Beets are a versatile food that can be eaten roasted, steamed, raw, and pickled. Beets will bleed their red color onto other foods. Cook beets separately from other foods and add at the end of recipes to avoid turning your entire dish pink. Also try golden varieties or Chioggia (red/white striped), which do not bleed their colors. Beet greens can also be eaten raw, steamed, or in recipes in place of greens such as spinach.

Cooking

Select beets with firm skins. Smaller beets are more tender. If greens are still attached, select beets with fresh looking leaves. Beet roots can be stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Remove greens before storing. Beet greens should be used within a few days.

Buying Tips



Beets



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Did You Know

- The Romans were some of the first people to cultivate and develop beets for their roots as well as use them for feeding animals. The Greeks were the first people to consume both the roots and leaves.
- The color of beet roots can range from dark purple to bright red, yellow, or white. When cut transversely, the roots show light and dark rings, sometimes alternating. The Chioggia beet is red and white-striped and is nicknamed the "candy cane" beet.
- Beets are a root vegetable of the Chenopodiace, or Goosefoot family. The Beta vulgaris species includes beets (table beets, processing beets, and novelty beets), chard, mangelwurzel, and sugar beets. Beets contain a pigment called betacyanin that gives them their deep red color. The beet, like its cousin the turnip, is known for its edible leaves and roots.



Nutrition Information

Beets, like many vegetables, are rich in many nutrients. In particular, beets provide potassium, vitamin A, and riboflavin. Also, beets are high in folate and magnesium. Beets contain nitrates which help open up the blood vessels allowing blood pressure levels to decrease, and also improve energy levels. Betalain, an antioxidant found in beets, helps protect the body against inflammation and helps remove toxins from the body.

Dig Deeper

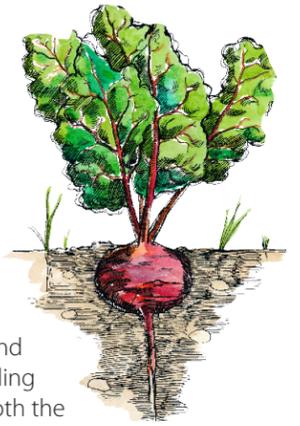
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