

# Taste Test: Beets



Beets are versatile and delicious! They are a root vegetable and are rich in vitamin A, iron, and calcium. The most common type of beets have beautiful bright red/pink interiors. The compound responsible for this colour is called betalain, which is a type of powerful antioxidant that has been shown to reduce inflammation and help reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease.<sup>1</sup> Beets also come in golden, white, and chioggia varieties.<sup>2</sup>

## Food Fact

The leafy green tops of beets are also edible and contain additional nutrients such as vitamin A and C!<sup>2</sup>

### How to Prepare:

- Choose beets that have a firm texture, smooth skin and a deep red exterior colour<sup>2</sup>
- Inspect the greens on top of the beet to make sure they are fresh and not wilted
- Small to medium sized beets have a more pleasant flavour and they cook more quickly<sup>2</sup>
- Canned beets are also a great alternative to fresh beets and also can be stored for up to 4 years<sup>2</sup>

### How to Prepare:

- Beets can be consumed in numerous ways
- Due to their pigment, beets have the potential to stain skin and other surfaces temporarily, therefore it is recommended to wear gloves when handling to prevent this!
- If boiling or steaming beets, keep the skin on for easy clean up, this also helps to soften the flesh.<sup>2</sup>

### How to Store:

- Keep beets unwashed in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator, cut off the leaves so 2 inches remain
- Store the remaining beet leaves in an airtight container, these will stay fresh for up to 3 days<sup>2</sup>
- Freeze beets by boiling, placing them in an ice bath, then cutting into cubes, or pickling!

### Note:

Canada's food guide recommends:

- Half of your plate containing a variety of vegetables and fruits<sup>3</sup>

## I Tried It!

My Rating (circle one):

Would you like to try beets again?

YES     NO

### Ideas for Serving Beets:

- Prepare pickled beets
- Use cubed beets as an additional vegetable in your salad!
- Try making beet hummus
- Try grilling or roast beets
- Try adding beets to your morning smoothie
- Beets pair beautifully with fruits like apple and peaches

### Lentil Borscht with Kale

Makes 8 servings

#### Ingredients

- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 4 beets, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 6 cups low sodium chicken, beef, or vegetable stock
- 28 oz (1 can) diced tomatoes
- 1 cup green lentils
- 4 cups kale, centre rib removed, torn into small pieces
- 1 lemon, juiced
- Optional: sour cream or plain Greek yogurt (for garnish)



#### Directions

1. Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add onion, carrot, celery, and beets, and cook for 5-7 minutes, until onions are soft.
2. Stir in garlic, paprika, salt, and pepper and cook for another minute.
3. Pour in stock, tomatoes, and lentils. Increase heat to high and bring soup to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 40-50 minutes, until lentils are cooked and beets are soft.
4. Stir in kale, lemon juice, dill, and sugar. Cook for another 5 minutes until kale is soft. If the soup is too thick, add more stock or water. Adjust seasonings with more salt and pepper, if needed.
5. Ladle into soup bowls and garnish with sour cream or plain Greek yogurt.

Recipe adapted from [Cookspiration](#).

Getting children involved in cooking at home makes them more likely to eat more protein and select healthy foods. For more information, please contact APPLE Schools at [info@appleschool.ca](mailto:info@appleschool.ca).

<sup>1</sup>Alberta Diabetes Foundation. Bring on the Beets. <https://www.albertadiabetesfoundation.com/bring-on-the-beets>. Accessed March 2022.

<sup>2</sup>Today's Dietitian. Beets- The History, Myriad Uses, and Health Benefits of These Beloved Roots. <https://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/0220p26.shtml>. Accessed March 2022.

<sup>3</sup>Government of Canada. Canada's Food Guide. <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>. Accessed March 2022.