Beets

Selecting

Beets are a root vegetable whose root and leaves are edible. The two most common beet varieties sold in grocery stores are the red and the golden yellow types. You may also find pink, white and striped beets on occasion.

Fresh beets will have bright, dark green leaves attached. When making your selection, look for small to medium size beets that are smooth and blemish free. The best ones are 1 to 2 inches (2.5-5 cm) in diameter.

Storing beets

Before storing, separate the beets from the leaves, leaving 1 to 2 inches (2.5 -5 cm) of stems attached to the beet. This prevents the beets from bleeding into the water when you use the boiling preparation method.

Keep the leaves to use as you would spinach. Store leaves and beets in separate sealed plastic bags in the refrigerator vegetable bin. The leaves will last 2 to 3 days; the beets will last 2 to 3 weeks.

Preparing beets

Wash beets thoroughly, just before preparing. To prepare, place them in a pot of boiling water for 45-60 minutes. Drain them, let them cool, then remove the remaining stem bits and peel off the outer layer of skin using paper toweling. The outer layer will slide off easily.

Peeling beets is a messy process. So, before you peel, cover your work surface with wax paper, and wear disposable gloves.

If the beets are small (1 inch/2.5 cm), they can be grated and used raw in salads.

Eating beets

Beets are very versatile. They can be roasted together with other root vegetables, and make a great addition to salads, hummus, sandwiches or soups.

Fresh beet leaves can be used in the same ways you would use spinach: add them to salads, pastas, soups, etc.

Seasonality

Beets are available locally from June to October but can be purchased all year long.

Nutrition

Beets are high in nutrients. They are very high folate and manganese and are a source of fibre, iron, magnesium, potassium and Vitamin C. A half cup of beets has 40 calories.

Here is a delicious recipe for Beet and Squash Tarts.
www.halfyourplate.ca/recipe/beet-and-squash-tarts

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