

# Beets

## 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.
- While different in nutrient composition and culinary use, sugar beets are an important part of Montana's economy. Montana is a top producer of sugar beets, harvesting nearly 1.5 million pounds from 44,000 acres in 2014!
- Beets are a source of potassium, vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, and magnesium—all great for growing bodies and athletes!
- Although beets are not grown in the winter in Montana, they can be kept fresh in the right storage conditions for months, making them a good vegetable for winter months.

## Produce Tips

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.

## Cooking

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.

## Recipes

### Beets and Sweets Heart-Shaped Chips

A food dehydrator is an easy way to cook these chips without an oven.

*Adapted from Nourishing Balance*  
([www.nourishingbalance.com](http://www.nourishingbalance.com))

#### Servings

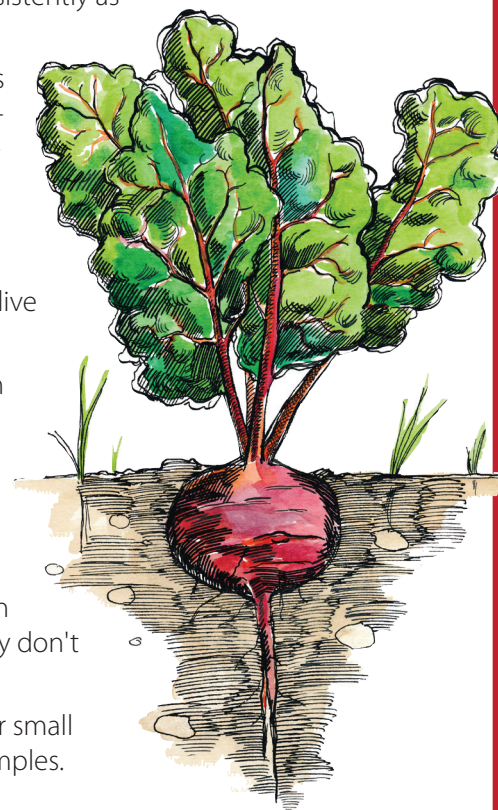
4 (or more as 1/4 cup samples)

#### Ingredients

3 beets, rinsed, scrubbed, do not peel or pierce  
1 sweet potato, rinsed, scrubbed, do not peel  
2 Tbsp olive oil  
Sea salt to taste

#### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Slice beets and sweet potato thinly using the slicing blade of a food processor, mandolin, or sharp knife. They should be the thickness of a thick potato chip. Cut them as consistently as possible.
3. Cut sliced rounds with metal heart-shaped (or whatever you prefer) cookie cutter.
4. On cookie sheet, toss chips with olive oil and salt.
5. Spread evenly on cookie sheet.
6. Roast 20-30 minutes turning halfway through, until crisp. Check often to make sure they don't burn.
7. Use toothpicks or small cups to serve samples.



## Galina's Very Berry Beet Smoothies

This is a great way to incorporate many garden and locally produced items into one tasty snack! (carrot, apples, beet, kale).

Source: VitaMix

### Servings

2, or several as small samples  
(2-5 ounce servings)

### Ingredients

- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 carrot
- 2 apples, cut into chunks
- 1 peeled beet, cut into chunks
- 3 kale leaves

### Directions

1. Wash and prepare all ingredients.
2. Add all ingredients to blender, preferably a high-powered blender. For a very thick shake, do not add water. Add water to thin or if not using a high-speed blender.
3. Blend 45 seconds.



## Book Nook

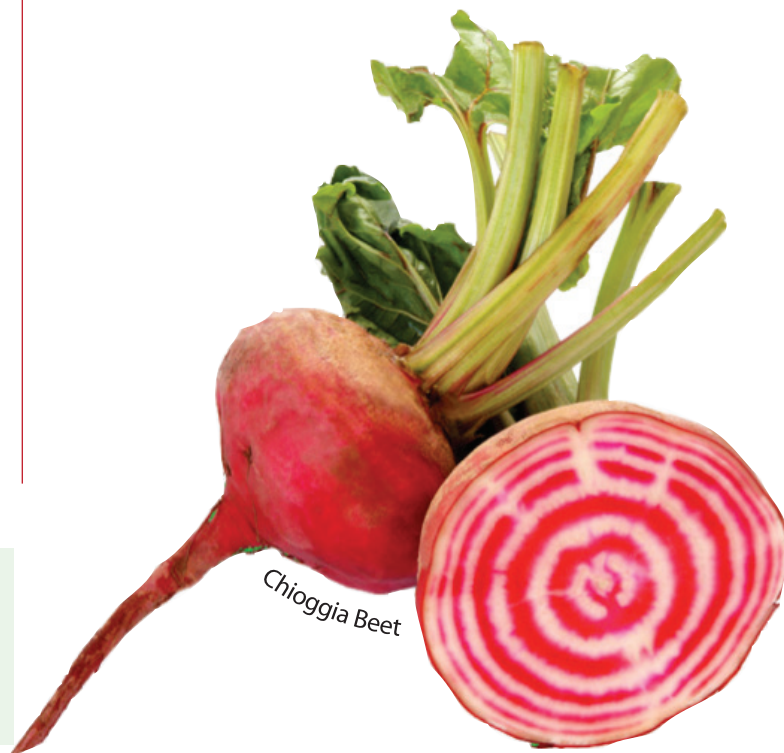
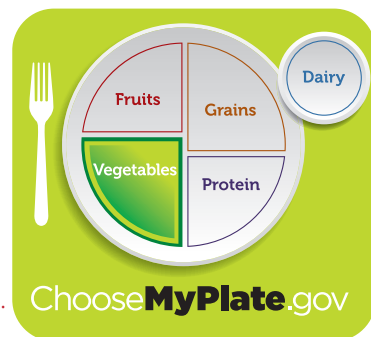
*The Turnip*, by Pierr Morgan

*Tops and Bottoms*, by Janet Stevens

## Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit:

[mtharvestofthemonth.org](http://mtharvestofthemonth.org).



### Notes:

## 2 Montana Harvest of the Month: Beets



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](http://mtharvestofthemonth.org)

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