

Beets

Earthy and brilliantly colored, beets can be extremely sweet and succulent, almost like candy, and not at all like the canned concoctions you may have endured. This said, we want all you recalcitrant beet-avoiders to give them a try.

STORAGE

Cut off any greens, leaving an inch of stem. Refrigerate the unwashed greens in a closed plastic bag. Store the beet roots, unwashed, with the rootlets (or “tails”) attached, in a plastic bag in the crisper bin of your refrigerator. They will keep for several weeks, but their sweetness diminishes with time.

HANDLING

Just before cooking, scrub beets well and remove any scraggly leaves and rootlets. If your recipe calls for raw beets, peel them with a knife or vegetable peeler, then grate or cut according to your needs.

Beet Slices in Creamy Mustard Sauce

For this recipe, tender cooked beets are sliced and warmed in a creamy and delicious mustard sauce. If you cook the beets ahead of time, this becomes a low-fuss, high-impact side dish you can prepare and serve almost instantly. *Angelic Organics Kitchen* (adapted from *Greene on Greens*).

Serves 4

1 1/2 pounds beets, scrubbed, trimmed
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/4 cup chopped shallot or red onion
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1/2 cup vegetable or chicken stock
1/4 cup milk
3 tablespoons prepared Dijon mustard
salt and freshly ground black pepper
chopped fresh parsley

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Place beets in a small roasting pan with 1/2 cup water. Cover with foil and bake until beets are easily pierced with a sharp knife, 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on size. Allow beets to cool slightly, then run under cold water and slip off their skins. Slice the beets in half; cut each half into 1/4-inch wedges.
3. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Add the shallot or red onion; cook, stirring, for 4 minutes. Add flour and stir constantly for 2 minutes. Whisk in the stock, milk, and mustard. Cook and stir the mixture until slightly thickened. Add the beets, continuing to cook and stir until they are warmed through, about 10 minutes.
4. Remove the skillet from heat. Season with salt and pepper to taste and garnish with parsley.

Baked Beet-and-Carrot Burgers with Brown Rice, Sunflower Seeds, and Cheddar Cheese

If you like veggie burgers, you'll love this recipe. Sweet beets and carrots give luscious flavor to these baked patties—together with pungent onion, snappy Cheddar cheese, and lots of toasty nuts and seeds. Great on wheat buns with mayo! Additional flour and egg can be substituted for the rice. *Angelic Organics Kitchen* (adapted from the *Rose Valley Farm Food Book*).

Makes 12 patties

butter for greasing the baking sheet
1/2 cup sesame seeds
1 cup sunflower seeds
2 cups peeled, grated beets (1–2 medium beets)
2 cups grated carrots (about 4 carrots)
1/2 cup minced onion (about 1 medium onion)
2 eggs, lightly beaten

1 cup cooked brown rice
1 cup grated Cheddar cheese
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup finely chopped fresh parsley
3 tablespoons flour
2 tablespoons soy sauce or tamari
1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
(about 1/2 teaspoon)
1/8–1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly coat a baking sheet with butter.

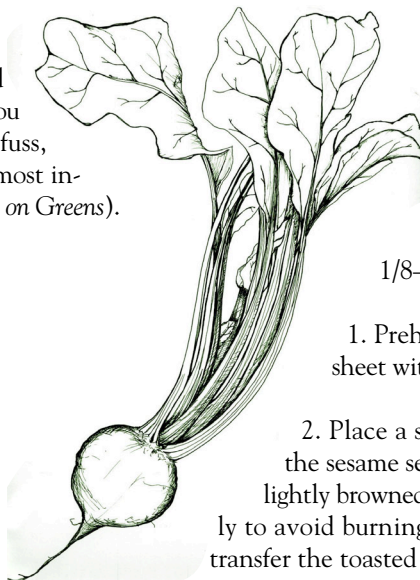
2. Place a small, heavy skillet over medium heat. Add the sesame seeds and stir them on the dry skillet just until lightly browned and fragrant, 3 to 5 minutes, watching closely to avoid burning them. Immediately remove from heat and transfer the toasted seeds to a dish to cool.

3. Return the skillet to the heat. Add the sunflower seeds and stir them on the dry skillet just until lightly browned and fragrant, 3 to 5 minutes, watching closely to avoid burning them. Immediately transfer them to the dish with the sesame seeds.

4. Combine the beets, carrots, and onion in a large bowl. Stir in the toasted sunflower and sesame seeds, eggs, rice, Cheddar cheese, oil, flour, parsley, soy sauce or tamari, and garlic (your hands work best here). Add cayenne (use 1/4 teaspoon for spicier burgers) and mix until thoroughly combined.

5. Using your hands, shape the mixture into 12 patties and arrange them in rows on the baking sheet.

6. Bake the patties until brown around the edges, about 20 minutes. Unless they are very large and thick, it should not be necessary to turn them. Serve alone or on buns.



Excerpted from *Farmer John's Cookbook: The Real Dirt On Vegetables: Seasonal Recipes and Stories from a Community Supported Farm* by Farmer John Peterson & Angelic Organics (Gibbs Smith Publisher). Check with your local farm or bookstore for availability. Additional recipes, charts, individual copies of this book, and quantity discounts available at www.AngelicOrganics.com/cookbook.

