

Beet roots are a high source of folate yielding 22% of the daily value for a single beet. They contain fiber and potassium, along with phytonutrients called betalains which give beets their deep red colors. Betalains are not found in many foods, but are very rich in beets. Finally, beets are rich in nitrates, which are taken into the roots from the soil.

Farm to Health Series

MAXIMIZE YOUR NUTRIENTS FROM: **BEETS**



NUTRIENT AND PHYTOCHEMICAL CHANGES

Beets should be stored in the refrigerator – cut the stems a few inches above the root and store in an air-tight plastic bag. For best nutrient and phytochemical retention, eating raw beets is best. These can be incorporated into salads or used on sandwiches. When cooking beets, steaming is recommended over roasting or boiling.

HOW THEY IMPROVE HEALTH

- Beets have large antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and can aid the elimination of unwanted compounds from the body.
- Although there is limited research evidence on beets, preliminary cell studies suggest that the particular antioxidants in beets may be associated with reduced risk of some cancers.
- Nitrates in beets have been suggested to lower blood pressure in patients with hypertension and may aid endurance exercise.

	Fiber	Folate	Potassium	Betalains
Fresh, whole storage	=	↓	=	↓
Fresh, chopped storage	=	↓	=	↓
Cooked:				
Lightly sautéed	=	↓	=	↓
Roasted or grilled	=	↓↓	=	↓↓
Steamed	=	↓	=	↓
Boiled, drained	=	↓↓	↓	↓↓
Frozen (requires cooking before freezing)				
Steamed before freezing	=	↓	=	↓
Boiled before freezing	=	↓↓	↓	↓↓
During frozen storage	=	=	=	=
Canned or pickled:				
Drained	=	↓↓	↓	↓↓
Liquid consumed	=	↓	=	↓↓

↓: decrease, ↓↓: large decrease, =: no change, ↑: increase, ↑↑: large increase

Recipe: Beet, Carrot and Apple Salad

(Reprinted with permission from the American Institute for Cancer Research, www.aicr.org)

This salad utilizes raw beets to maximize retention of betalains, folate and potassium.

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup shredded beet (1 medium)
- 3/4 cup shredded carrot (2 medium)
- 1 large unpeeled Granny Smith apple
- 1/4 cup walnut halves, chopped
- 3 Tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley or dill
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

Directions:

- To shred beet, cover hands in plastic sandwich bags to avoid staining. Peel beet using swivel blade vegetable peeler. Coarsely shred beet to get 3/4 cup. Save remaining beet for another use. Shred carrots and apple. Place shredded beets, carrots and apple in mixing bowl and mix to combine. Add walnuts and green herbs on top of mixed vegetables, and set bowl aside.
- Dressing: in small bowl whisk together lemon juice and salt until salt dissolves. Add 3-4 grinds of pepper. Whisk in oil. Pour dressing over salad and mix until well combined and evenly dressed. Serve salad within 1 hour of combining with herbs and dressing.



For more information or how to maximize nutrients in other fruits and vegetables, see <http://localfoods.osu.edu/maximizenutrients>.



Makes 4 servings. Per Serving: 112 calories, 8 g total fat (<1 g saturated fat), 11 g carbohydrate, 2 g protein, 2 g dietary fiber, 4154 IU vitamin A (83% DV), 39.65 µg folate (6% DV), 330 mg sodium, 241.26 mg potassium (7% DV)

This information is not meant to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. This project is made possible by funding through OSU CARES - an initiative of OSU Extension and the OSU to expand faculty, staff and student partnerships with communities throughout Ohio.



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