



Harvest of the Month

December is Beets



Nutrition & Health Benefits

- **Folate** - Helps to prevent birth defects, is needed to make DNA, and helps your cells divide.
- **Vitamin C** - Helps wounds heal, is important for the immune system, and is an antioxidant, which protects our cells from damage.
- **Potassium** - Helps to maintain normal blood pressure.

Preparation & Cooking Tips

- **Select** - Choose beets with firm, smooth skin and crisp leaves. Smaller beets are more tender.
- **Store** - Remove greens leaving about 1 inch of stem. Store beets in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.
- **Prepare** - Rinse beets under cool, running water and scrub with vegetable brush. Beets can be eaten raw or cooked.

Did you know?

- Beets come in many colors such as red, pink, purple, white, yellow, and even candy cane striped.
- Fresh beets grown in Wisconsin are available from June through October.
- Beets are related to Swiss Chard and both the beet root and leaves can be eaten.

Fun Facts

- Beet juice can be used as a natural dye! The Victorians even dyed their hair with beet juice in 19th century England.
- Beets are native to the shores of North Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.
- Beets were first grown by the ancient Romans.

TASTE



Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!

taste testing

Purchase fresh beets and canned beets from the grocery store. Cook the fresh beets by boiling and then peeling them, or place beets with about ¼ cup of water in a microwave-safe dish and cover with a lid or plastic wrap. Microwave on high until tender (about 10-12 minutes). Let kids try one slice of fresh beet and one slice of canned beet. Encourage kids to use their five senses to observe, smell, feel, listen, and taste the beets. How are they the same or different?

To sweeten the fresh and canned beets prior to tasting, marinate them overnight in orange juice or orange juice concentrate (depending on how sweet you want the taste testing).

— Credit Julie Yezek, FoodWise Nutrition Educator



fit families

Eat healthy • Be active • Your kids are watching

FUN



Red Beets

activity: Grow Your Own Beet Greens

Objective: Kids will learn how to grow beet greens from cuttings.

Supplies: Beets, shallow plate, water, and a chef's knife (for adults!).

Procedure:

1. Buy a bunch of beets with the tops still attached.
2. Trim the greens off (and save them for eating! You can wash the beet greens, chop, and saute them in olive oil - yum!).
3. Cut off the top of the beets with at least ½ inch of beetroot still attached.
4. Set the beet tops cut-side down in a dish of water and leave in a sunny spot in your classroom. Change the water every other day.
5. Use the leftover beetroot for taste testing.
6. Ask kids to make daily observations as the beets begin to grow more leaves. Discuss what plants need to grow. Answer: *sunlight, water, and air (carbon dioxide)*. Once the leaves are big enough, cut a few to taste!

— Credit: Nicole Leipski, FoodWise Teaching Coordinator

This activity can be done in multiple settings: classroom, outdoors, garden, or virtual.

Tips for adapting to virtual learning: An educator can grow beet greens and share the process with kids over a virtual learning platform. You can also share a link to a video: <https://youtu.be/5VJbkjBU3jY>.

Share pictures and engage with the Wisconsin Harvest of the Month community by using #WIHarvestoftheMonth on social media.

READ



books

- *Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens
- *The Big Beet* by Lynn Ward
- *Squash Boom Beet: An Alphabet for Healthy, Adventurous Eaters* by Lisa Maxbauer Price
- *Beets: Fun Facts on Fruits & Vegetables* by Michelle Hawkins
- *The Farmer & the Beet* by Jeremy David



Beet Chips

Ingredients:

- 2 beet roots (peeled and sliced)
- 1/2 Tablespoon olive oil
- salt to taste

Preparation:

1. Place sliced beets in a bowl and toss with oil. Place in air fryer basket in a single layer.
2. Air fry on 330 degrees Fahrenheit for 15-20 minutes (or until beets are slightly crispy) stirring beets and separating them in a single layer if they overlap during cooking.
3. Remove once beets get slightly crispy and lay them on a plate, beets will get crispier once removed.
4. Salt to taste.
5. Enjoy!



Information adapted from Wisconsin Harvest of the Month.

Source: <https://www.myforkinglife.com/crispy-air-fryer-beet-chips/>