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Beets Food Preservation Series
Michigan State University Extension Service
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BEETS

AVAILABILITY
Late July to late October

TRIM LOSS
10 percent from taproot and stems.

YIELD
2 ½ to 3 pounds fresh (without tops) 2 pints frozen
13 ½ pounds (without tops) canner load of 9 pints
21 pounds (without tops) canner load of 7 quarts
1 bushel (without tops) (52 pounds) 15 to 20 quarts canned
(3 pounds per quart)

FREEZING
Select beets no more than 3 inches across. Beets larger than 3 inches in diameter are often fibrous. Trim off beet tops, leaving an inch of stem and roots to reduce bleeding of color. Wash and sort according to size. Cook in boiling water until tender—small beets, 25 to 30 minutes; medium-sized beets, 45 to 50 minutes. Cool promptly in cold water.

CANNING
Pressure canning: Pressure canning is the ONLY safe method for canning beets. Place jar rack, 2 inches of water and sealed jars in canner. Fasten lid and heat canner on high heat. After exhausting a steady stream of steam for 10 minutes, add weighted gauge or close petcock to pressurize the canner. Start timing when the desired pressure is reached.

When processing is complete, remove canner from heat. Air-cool canner until it is fully depressurized. Then slowly remove weighted gauge or open petcock, wait 2 more minutes, and unfasten and carefully remove canner lid.

Remove jars from canner with a jar lifter and place them on a towel or rack. DO NOT retighten screw bands. Air-cool jars 12 to 24 hours. Remove screw bands and check lid seals. If the center of the lid is indented, wash, dry, label and store jar in a clean, cool, dark, dry place.

If after 12 to 24 hours the lid is unsealed, examine and replace jar if defective, use a new lid and a screw band, and REPROCESS as before. Dump out beets and liquid into a pan, reheat until boiling, fill hot jars with beets and liquid, leaving 1 inch headspace. Place NEW LIDS and screw bands on jars and process for the time recommended on back. When jars have sealed and cooled, remove, wash and store screw bands separately.

Beets are best if consumed within a year and safe as long as lids remain vacuum sealed.

RECOMMENDED VARIETIES
Detroit Dark Red. Honey Red, Little Ball and Ruby Queen are excellent varieties for canning. Try Little Ball for pickling.

Remove skins and cut into slices or cubes. Beets with a diameter of 1 to 2 inches are preferred for whole packs.

Pack beets into containers, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

Freeze no more than 2 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. A cubic foot will hold 7.4 gallons.

Prepare beets: Trim off beet tops, leaving an inch of stem and roots to reduce bleeding of color. Scrub well. Cover with boiling water. Boil until skins slip off easily—about 15 to 25 minutes, depending on size.

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Cool, remove skins, and trim off stems and roots. Leave baby beets whole. Cut medium or large beets into ½-inch cubes or slices. Halve or quarter very large slices. Add 1 teaspoon of salt per quart to each jar, if desired. Fill jars with hot beets and fresh hot water, leaving 1 inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

**Pickled Beets (about 8 pints)**

The boiling water canner method is acceptable for pickled beets because the added vinegar makes them an acid food.

- 7 pounds of 2- to 2 ½ -inch diameter beets
- 2 cups water
- 4 cups white or cider vinegar (5% acidity)
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 ½ teaspoons canning or pickling salt
- 12 whole cloves
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 to 6 onions (2- to 2 ½ -inch diameter), if desired


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**Variation:** Pickled whole baby beets. Follow above directions but use beets that are 1 to 11/2 inches in diameter. Pack whole-do not slice. Onions may be omitted.

**Beets with Pineapple (serves 4)**

- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups beets, cooked, sliced, drained
- 1 8 3/4 ounce can (1 cup) pineapple tidbits

Combine sugar, cornstarch and salt in saucepan. Stir in pineapple (with syrup). Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and bubbles. Add butter, lemon juice and beets. Cook over medium heat about 5 minutes or until hot.

**Beet Relish (1 ½ CUPS)**

- 1 ½ cups beets, cooked, chopped
- 3 tablespoons prepared horseradish, well drained
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons sugar salt or celery seed to taste

Toss all ingredients together in mixing bowl. Refrigerate before serving.

**Red Flannel Hash (serves 6)**

- 4 cups potatoes, peeled, cooked, finely chopped
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 11/2 cups beets, cooked, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- ½ cup onion, finely chopped
- salt pepper, celery salt, if desired
- 1 cup corned beef, cooked, finely chopped

Mix chopped vegetables and meat lightly. Add seasoning. Moisten mixture with cream. Melt margarine in heavy frying pan. Place vegetable/meat mixture in pan, spread evenly. Brown over low heat (5 to 10 minutes). To serve, fold one half over the other so crusty bottom is on top.