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Beets Food Preservation Series
Michigan State University Extension Service
Sandra L. Andrews, Food Science and Human Nutrition
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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)	35 to 42 pints frozen 15 to 20 quarts canned (3 pounds per quart)

RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Beets, In a Dial-Gauge Pressure Canner						
Recommended Process Times						
Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of						
Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	0-2,000ft.	2,001-4,000ft.	4,001-6,000ft.	6,001-8,000ft.
Hot	Pints	30 min.	11 lb.	12 lb.	13 lb.	14 lb.

Beets In a Weighted- Gauge Pressure Canner				
Recommended Process Times				
Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of				
Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	0-1,000 ft.	Above 1,000 ft.
Hot	Pints	30 min.	10 lb.	15 lb.

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

Trim off beet tops, leaving 1 inch of stem and roots to prevent bleeding of color. Wash thoroughly. Sort for size. Cover similar sized beets with boiling water and cook until tender (about 25 to 30 minutes). CAUTION: DRAIN AND DISCARD LIQUID. Extra liquid will dilute the vinegar, making the product unsafe. Cool beets. Trim off roots and stems and slip off skins. Slice into 1/4-inch slices. Peel and thinly slice onions, if desired. Combine vinegar, salt, sugar and fresh water. Put spices in cheesecloth bag and add to vinegar mixture. Bring to a boil. Add beets and onions. Simmer 5 minutes. Remove spice bag. Fin jars with beets and onions and add vinegar solution, allowing ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

Pickled Beets					
Recommended Process Times in a Boiling-Water Canner					
Process times (in minutes) at altitudes of					
Style of pack	Jar size	0-1,000ft.	1,001-3,000ft.	3,001-6,000ft.	6,001-8,000ft.
Hot	Pints	30 min.	35 min.	40 min.	45 min.

Variation: Pickled whole baby beets. Follow above directions but use beets that are 1 to 1½ 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
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups beets, cooked, sliced, drained
- 1 8 ¾ 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
- 1½ 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.

Prepared by Sandra L. Andrews, Ph.D., R.D., Extension Specialist, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, Michigan State University.

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This bulletin was originally prepared by Shirley Hamman, Allegan County Extension home economist, Kathleen Staskiewicz, Ottawa County Extension home economist, and Penny Ross, Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist, MSU.

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(Food- Preservation and Storage)