

# Bold, Beautiful BEETS!!!

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To be honest, I avoided beets for most of my life. It was not until I traveled to Russia and had Borscht that I started to realize how fabulous this vegetable was. I am now in love. Not only do they taste great, they are versatile and the color – fabulous! You have to be careful though – when cooking with beets – the juice of the beets stains everything. Beets were used to die fabrics for many years.

Another issue with beets that keeps people away from them is that peeling a beet looks like a challenge. Actually it is very easy – just not how you would normally approach it. The best way to peel a beet is to roast it covered in a little bit of oil in a 350 degree oven for about 15 minutes or so until the skin starts to wrinkle. Put the hot beets inside a plastic or brown paper bag and let sit for about 10 minutes – allowing them to steam. Using a papertowel or the bag it steamed in peel the skins away from the beets. This is the same way you would peel roasted peppers. Again, just be careful because the beets will stain anything they come in contact with. If you peel the beets with your hands then I recommend wearing gloves since they will stain your skin.

Once the beets are peeled they are ready to use to make fabulous dishes! You can also simply chop them up at this point and add them to arugula, with goat cheese and hazelnuts and you have a wonderful salad.

Since it is cold outside I am going to share the dish that made me fall in love with beets – Borscht! I am also going to give you a lighter vegetarian option so that everyone can enjoy. – Your Chef Lara



## *Beef Borscht*

*Nothing says comfort food like Borscht. This take on a classic is warm and perfect for the fall or winter.*

### **YIELD**

10 Servings

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### **INGREDIENTS**

- **1/2** lb bacon, diced
- **1** lb lean beef chuck, cut into bite-size pieces
- **1** cup chopped yellow onions
- **1** carrot, peeled and grated
- **1** Tbs minced garlic
- **2** tsp dried oregano
- **2** tsp dill seeds
- **2** bay leaves
- **3** Tbs red wine vinegar, plus more to taste
- **2** quarts water
- **1** tsp salt
- **1** tsp ground black pepper
- **1 1/2** lbs red beets, greens tops removed, roasted and grated
- **1** Tbs vegetable oil
- **1** large russet potato, peeled and diced
- **6** cups shredded green cabbage
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- **1** cup sour cream
- **1/2** cup chopped fresh dill

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### **INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
- 2.** Place the bacon in a Dutch oven or stockpot and cook, stirring, over medium-high heat until the fat begins to render, about 3 minutes. Add the beef and cook, stirring, until brown on all sides, about 5 minutes. Remove the meat from the pan with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.
- 3.** To the fat in the pan, add the onions and carrots, and stir to coat. Cook until soft, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic, oregano, dill seeds, and bay leaves and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the red wine vinegar and stir to deglaze the pan. Return the meat to the pot

and add the water, salt, and pepper and bring to boil. Reduce the heat and simmer partially covered until the beef is tender, about 2 hours.

4. Meanwhile, place the beets on a baking sheet and brush with the oil. Roast until tender and can be pierced easily with a knife, about 1 hour. Remove from the oven and let sit until cool enough to handle. Trim the stem and root ends and remove the skins. Coarsely grate and set aside.
5. When the meat is tender and falling apart add the beets, potatoes, and cabbage. Simmer over low heat for another 30 minutes. Season with additional red wine vinegar, salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste.
6. Ladle borscht into bowls and garnish with a dollop of sour cream and pinch of fresh dill.



## *Beetroot, Ginger and Garlic Soup*

*Black Quinoa takes longer to cook than the other varieties so you will have to vary the cooking time according to how tender you would prefer the quinoa to be. You can use whichever quinoa you prefer. The recipe calls for black quinoa because the contrast of the blank against the vibrant red of the beetroot looks wonderful.*

### **YIELD**

6-8 servings

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### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 2 red onions, chopped
- 4 large cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 small knob ginger, grated to make about 1-2 tablespoons
- 2 lb 4oz/1kg fresh beetroot, peeled and chopped
- Few sprigs of fresh thyme
- Zest of 1 lime
- Pinch of ground cloves
- 8 cups hot chicken or vegetable stock
- Salt and freshly cracked black pepper
- 2/3 cup black quinoa, rinsed and drained
- Lime juice, to serve
- Natural Greek yoghurt or sour cream, to serve

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### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan and saute the onions until soft.
2. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for about 1-2 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add the beetroot, thyme, lime zest and cloves and cook for another 2 minutes.
4. Pour in the stock and season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil then reduce the heat and simmer for about 40-45 minutes until the beetroot is tender.
5. Puree the soup, bring back to the boil then add the quinoa, reduce the heat and simmer on low heat, covered for about 20-25 minutes until the quinoa is cooked. Serve garnished with a good squeeze of lime juice and a dollop of yoghurt or sour cream.

*Source - EVERYDAY QUINOA - RENA PATTEN*