

'Beet' the heat with these Ruby veggie gems

There's still time to enjoy dining al fresco - not to mention those days of Indian summer that we always look forward to!

Pair versatile pickled beets with a variety of tasty summer vegetables to create some outstanding appetizers for you and your guests to enjoy.

Crudites with Ruby Beet Vinaigrette is a delicious way to showcase summer produce. A blend of fresh herbs (your choice), mustard, garlic and olive oil teamed with the sweet-tangy liquid from pickled beets makes a tasty vinaigrette to serve as a dipping sauce for an array of fresh vegetables.

Beet & Gorgonzola-Stuffed Endive is simple, but sublime featuring endive leaves filled with the Gorgonzola and topped with pickled beets and walnuts. Pickled beets also star on crostini, along with fresh yellow and red tomatoes, basil and goat cheese.

For a more substantial appetizer choice, Beet & Beet

Canapés might sound a bit unusual, but these unique, flavorful bites are a real winner! Seasoned cream cheese, horseradish and pickled beets, rolled into deli pastrami is a real taste bud tingler.

CRUDITES WITH RUBY BEET VINAIGRETTE

- 1 jar (16 ounces) whole pickled beets
- 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs (such as basil, chives, dill, oregano, rosemary)
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- Assortment of steamed fresh vegetables such as asparagus spears, baby yellow and zucchini squash, baby carrots, green and wax beans, small halved new and fingerling potatoes, sugar snap peas.

1. Drain beets and reserve 1/2 cup of beet liquid. Cut beets into halves and set aside.

2. Place reserved beet juice, mustard, garlic, herbs, honey and salt in blender container. Blend on high 10 seconds. Pour olive oil into mixture with machine running and blend well. Pour mixture into serving container.

3. Arrange beets and vegetables on platter. Serve vinaigrette as a dip or poured over vegetables. Makes one cup vinaigrette.

Note: Vinaigrette tastes best if made several hours or up to 1 day in advance to develop flavors.

BEET & GORGONZOLA-STUFFED ENDIVE

- 1 jar (16 ounces) sliced pickled beets
- 2-3 medium heads Belgian endive
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 4 ounces Gorgonzola (or other blue-veined cheese) at room temperature
- 1/2 cup chopped toasted walnuts
- Chopped fresh chives

1. Drain beets well; cut into 1/4-inch dice. Remove any bruised outer leaves from endive. Peel remaining leaves off endive.

and rinse in cold water. Dry in layers of paper toweling. (You will need about 24 leaves.)

2. In medium bowl combine cream cheese and Gorgonzola; mix until combined. Stir in walnuts.

3. Spread about 1 generous teaspoon of cheese mixture in center of each endive leaf. Top with 1 teaspoon diced beets and sprinkle with chopped chives. (Use any remaining beets in salads or as desired.)

Makes 24 appetizers

Note: To toast walnuts, spread in a single layer on baking sheet. Toast in 350 degree oven 5 to 10 minutes or until lightly toasted, stirring occasionally. Watch carefully; nuts can burn easily.

BEET, TOMATO & GOAT CHEESE CROSTINI

- 1 jar (16 ounces) sliced pickled beets
- 1/2 cup yellow, red or combination cherry tomatoes, cut into small dice
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh

basil

8 ounces fresh goat cheese, plain or with pepper

24 oven-baked Italian-style bread rounds

freshly ground pepper

1. Drain beets well; cut into 1/4-inch dice. Measure 1-1/2 cups diced beets. (Reserve remaining for use in salads.) In medium bowl combine beets, tomatoes, vinegar and basil. Let stand 15 to 30 minutes for flavors to blend.

2. To serve, spread about 1 generous teaspoon of goat cheese on each bread round and top with the beet mixture. Sprinkle with freshly ground black pepper. Serve immediately.

Makes 24 appetizers.

Note: Look for prepared bread rounds in the supermarket bakery; cracker or specialty food.

BEET & BEET CANAPÉS

- 1 jar (16 ounces) sliced pickled beets
- 2 containers (8 ounces each) chive and onion flavor cream cheese
- 1-1/2 tablespoons ground black

pepper

32 slices deli pastrami

1. Drain beets well; coarsely chop. Set aside.

2. In medium bowl, combine cream cheese, horseradish and pepper; blend well.

3. Working with 1 slice of pastrami at a time, cut slice in half crosswise. Spread 1/2 tablespoon cream cheese mixture over slice; top with 5 to 7 beet pieces. Firmly roll pastrami from shortest side. Cut each roll in half. Arrange on serving platter.

Makes about 128 canapés.

Note: For variety, substitute sliced deli turkey, roast beef or corned beef for the pastrami.

Recipes and information compliments of Aunt Helene's Pickled Beets.

Got a recipe to share? Send, e-mail or fax it to: Keely Kaleski, Taste editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009, fax (248) 644-1314 or (734) 591-7279 or e-mail kkaleski@oehomecomm.net Please copy and paste your recipe into an e-mail file.

FOOD STORAGE TIPS

■ When in doubt, throw it out: If it looks or smells strange, just chuck it. Remember that cooked poultry dishes keep only for 3 or 4 days in the refrigerator; uncooked bacon lasts 1 week; fresh eggs 3 weeks.

■ Unopened canned foods can be stored for at least 12 months

at 70-75 degrees. Many canned foods will keep longer, but because it's not always possible to know the food's true age, set a 12-month maximum.

■ Leftovers: Hot foods should be stored and refrigerated within 2 hours after cooking. It's a good idea to date leftovers so they can

be used within a safe timeframe.

■ Frozen foods: The amount of time commercially frozen foods can be kept in your freezer depends on the kind of food it is, and how long and at what temperature the food was stored before you bought it. Store fruits for a maximum of 1 year, veggies

up to 8 months and - this is the best scoop - ice cream can last up to one year!

■ Dried foods should be stored in cool, dry, dark areas for periods of 4 months to one year, depending on the degree of heat they're exposed to - the higher the temperature, the shorter the

storage time.

■ Cleaning up storage space: Take it one cabinet at a time. That way you'll be focused, you'll avoid getting overwhelmed by

the project, and you'll have a better chance of long-term organizational success.

Source: Tupperware

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SPOTLIGHT ON:
Orthodontics
by Josephine Finazzo, D.M.D.
A BEHIND-THE SCENE LOOK
As much as braces have evolved with a minimalist and fashionable look, some people are reluctant to show that they have orthodontic appliances on their teeth. With these patients in mind, fixed lingual orthodontic appliances were developed in the mid-1970's, largely due to increased interest in adult orthodontics. These "invisible" braces involve mounting the brackets on the lingual (tongue side) of the teeth. While lingual appliances are popular with patients who do not want their braces to be readily noticeable when they smile, they do pose some added challenges for the orthodontist. They are more difficult to adjust and may require alteration of the treatment plan. Consequently, treatment may take longer and be more expensive than treatment involving traditional braces. Ask your orthodontist to tell you about the many options available for treatment today. We are currently taking new patients at THE ORTHODONTIC GROUP, and we would be glad to explain orthodontic equipment such as the Twin Block, the Max file advance, the palatal expander, and the retainer. Call 442-8885 and our friendly staff will be happy to make you an appointment. Located at 19850 Middlebelt, payment plans and terms are available. Look for our next article in two weeks.
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