

## COLORFUL BEETS ADD FLAVOR & NUTRITION



Looking to add some color, interest, and flavor to your summer table? Consider beets! This underutilized superstar contains powerful antioxidants linked several health benefits. The beautiful purple color in beets comes from betacyanin, an antioxidant that may protect against some common carcinogens. The high nitrite content of beets and beet root juice has been of interest to athletes. Recent research suggests that the nitrites in beet juice may enhance athletic performance by increasing blood flow to the muscles. What we know for certain is that diets high in a variety of vegetables and fruits helps to reduce risk of constipation, obesity, heart disease, some cancers, and type 2 diabetes. . One cup of beets provides vitamins A and K, folate, potassium, magnesium, and 4 grams fiber.

Having cooked beets available in the fridge makes it easy to add them to your daily intake. Simply scrub beets, place them in a baking pan with about a quarter inch of water, cover with foil, and bake at 375 degrees for 45-60 minutes. Small beets may be fork tender after 30 minutes, so take a peek early. Do check the beets after 15-20 minutes. If the water evaporates, just add a bit more. The skins are easily removed when beets are cooled. Beets can be kept in the fridge for use on salads, or in recipes. Here is my favorite recipe for Beet Hummus inspired by [Simply Recipes](#).

### **Lemony Beet Hummus:**

½ pound (4 medium sized), cooked beets

2 tablespoons tahini (sesame seed paste)

3-5 tablespoons lemon juice, to taste

1 small clove garlic

1 tablespoon lemon zest

½ teaspoon table salt (or 1 teaspoon kosher salt)

Fresh ground pepper to taste.

Place all the ingredients in a food processor and pulse until mostly smooth. There will be some texture. Taste and adjust seasoning. This dip keeps in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Serve with anything that dips: pita chips, slices of cucumber, carrot or celery. Top toasted slices of baguette and sprinkle with goat cheese crumbles for a healthy and pretty crostini.

*Presented by Angela Hansen, RD at Mountain Heart-mountainheartcares.com*

