

Beet Greens (Greens)

Interesting facts: Beet greens are the leafy portions of red beets. Many people discard the leaves of the beets but the leaves are the most nutrient rich part of the plant. They are categorized as dark and leafy and are sold alongside spinach, Swiss chard, and other wild greens.

How to select: Organically grown is the best choice. When attached to the roots, choose smaller roots as the larger roots tend to be tougher, fibrous and have a woody core. The beet greens should be fresh, crisp, and should have a lively green color.

What to avoid: Avoid wilted, yellowing or slimy leaves as they are signs of rotting. They can become toxic and grow fungus so be sure they are fresh and always organic.

How to clean and store: Cut the beet greens and their stems from the root portion and store unwashed in a dry plastic bag. Squeeze the air out of the bag and refrigerate for up to four days. Prolonged exposure to air, light and heat decreases the nutrients in the beet greens. Rinse the greens with cool water before consuming. Beet greens can be frozen and used for soup stock.

How to cook: Sautéed, Steamed

Sautéed: Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the 2 bunches of beet greens, and cook uncovered until tender, about 2 minutes. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat.

Steamed: Clean 1 pound beet greens and cut leaves and stems and put into a steamer. Steam 5 minutes.

Recipe ideas:

For sautéed beet greens: Stir in 2 teaspoons minced garlic and ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes; cook and stir until fragrant, about 1 minute. Divide into four plates and serve with lemon wedge.

For steamed beet greens: Place steamed greens in a bowl and add 3 tablespoons butter, salt and pepper and 1 tablespoon balsamic and toss. Serve immediately.