



Media Script

KENTUCKY BEETS

CONTACT INFORMATION:

As grilling vegetables is to summer, roasting vegetables is to fall and winter. Not only does the cooler weather make it a wonderful time to turn on the oven, but the vegetables available in the fall are practically designed to be roasted. Most root vegetables, such as beets, parsnips, sweet potatoes, onions, turnips, potatoes, and winter squash, are perfect for roasting. The process of roasting brings out the natural sweetness of vegetables and intensifies their natural flavors. Beets, parsnips, and sweet potatoes lend themselves beautifully to the browning, caramelizing, and crisping that happens when vegetables are cooked at high temperatures.

Beets used to only be found on salad bars. Now, this root is commonly seen in stores and markets statewide. A beet, like its turnip cousin, has two parts, the edible root and the edible, green leaves. In Kentucky beets are available from June until November. They are good sources of fiber, folate, calcium, and vitamin C. One cup of cooked beets or one medium beet contains about 50 calories and 2 grams of fiber.

Choose beets that are round, firm, rich in color, and smooth over most of the surface. Wilted or decayed tops may indicate a lack of freshness. The roots of the beets can be stored in a plastic bag up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator.

Sweet potatoes and other root vegetables are also great for roasting. Kentucky grows two kinds of sweet potatoes. They are divided by color—dark orange and pale yellow or white.

Parsnips look like a pale carrot and are actually a relative of the carrot. Commonly found in Europe, this root vegetable arrived to the United States with the colonists. Parsnips have a flavor similar to celery and a nutty fragrance. They are available year round but their peak season is from fall until spring. Select medium sized roots with uniform, creamy-beige skin. Avoid limp, pitted, or shriveled roots. Store unwashed parsnips, wrapped in paper towel and placed in a plastic bag in the vegetable crisper of the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. One ½ cup of cooked parsnips has 60 calories and 3 grams of fiber.

For the diet-conscious, roasted vegetables add wonderful flavors to dishes without a lot of fat and calories. Try this tasty dish sometime this fall.

Roasted Root Vegetables

6 medium beets
2 large sweet potatoes
3 parsnips
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
Dressing (recipe follows)

Dressing
1/3 cup white wine vinegar
1/4 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons horseradish
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons honey
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
Stir together and set aside.

Directions: Preheat oven to 400°F.

Peel beets, sweet potatoes, and parsnips. Cut into 1/2 inch thick cubes.

Toss vegetables with olive oil and place in a single layer on a greased baking sheet.

Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Bake at 400°F for 20 to 25 minutes, or until tender. Cool. Arrange vegetables on a serving dish and drizzle with dressing.

Yield: 6 servings.

Nutrition Analysis: 210 calories, 10 g fat, 1.5 g sat fat, 3 g protein, 30 g carbohydrate, 0 mg cholesterol, 750 mg sodium, 7 g fiber.

Menu Idea: Serve with baked chicken, seasoned whole grain rice, and cottage cheese with pears.

Source: www.fruitandveggiesmatter.gov

For more delicious recipes and information using “Kentucky Proud” fruits and vegetables, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service or visit: www.kentuckyproud.com.

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Kentucky Proud Project

County Extension Agents for Family and Consumer Sciences