

ROASTED BEETS

Beets are one of the most under appreciated gifts from the garden. Their natural sweetness combines well with tart flavors such as goat cheese or citrus fruits, and goes well with fresh mint. While beets can always be boiled, boiling water removes some of the complexities of the beet flavor, and siphons off many of the nutrients. Roasting is an alternative method that produces a much richer tasting beet, with very little additional work.

1. Pre-heat your oven to 450°.
2. While the oven heats up, trim the tops off the beets (but don't peel them) and wash them under cold water. Don't peel the beets now – the skin will impart flavor to the beet during the roasting process. Also, make sure to save the beet greens. Although the amount of greens attached to a pound of beets is not very much, they can be steamed together with other tender greens, like spinach, for a separate side dish, and the red veins on the beet greens look beautiful with the other greens.
3. After washing the beets, dry them, rub them with olive oil, wrap individually in foil, and place in the oven. The roasting time will depend on the size of the beets. In my experience, beets the size of tennis balls will need to roast for one hour; you will need to adjust the time upwards or downwards from there. If you are not sure whether the beets are done, test by inserting a fork. They are done are done when the fork can be easily inserted.
4. Remove the beets from the oven. When they have completely cooled, unwrap them and slide the skin off with the help of a paring knife. The roasted beets will keep in your refrigerator for 4 or 5 days.