

Beets with Lemon and Almonds (“Cook’s Illustrated” number 121, March & April 2013, Celeste Rogers)

Serves 4-6

To ensure even cooking, we recommend using beets that are of similar size—roughly 2-3 inches in diameter. The beets can be served warm or at room temperature. If serving at room temperature, wait to sprinkle with almonds and herbs until right before serving.

1 ½ lbs beets, trimmed and halved horizontally
1 ¼ cups water
salt and pepper
3 Tbsp white vinegar
1 Tbsp packed light brown sugar
1 shallot, sliced thin
1 tsp grated lemon zest
½ cup whole almonds, toasted and chopped
2 Tbsp chopped fresh mint
1 tsp chopped fresh thyme

Place beets, cut side down, in single layer in 11-inch straight-sided sauté pan or Dutch oven. Add water and ¼ tsp salt; bring to simmer over high heat. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until beets are tender and tip of paring knife inserted into beets meets no resistance, 45-50 minutes.

Transfer beets to cutting board. Increase heat to medium-high and reduce cooking liquid, stirring occasionally, until pan is almost dry, 5-6 minutes. Add vinegar and sugar; return to boil; and cook, stirring constantly with heat-resistant spatula, until spatula leaves wide trail when dragged through glaze, 1-2 minutes. Remove pan from heat.

When beets are cool enough to handle, rub off skins with paper towel or dish towel and cut into ½-inch wedges. Add beets, shallot, lemon zest, ½ tsp salt, and ¼ tsp pepper to glaze and toss to coat. Transfer beets to serving dish; sprinkle with almonds, mint, and thyme; and serve.

Variations:

Omit thyme. Substitute lime zest for lemon zest, toasted pepitas for almonds, and cilantro for mint.

Substitute orange zest for lemon zest; walnuts, toasted and chopped, for almonds; and parsley for mint