Chlodnik Recipe (Polish style cold beet soup)
Beautiful cubes of cucumbers and beets add to the aesthetics of the soup, so give yourself over to the time it takes to cut them neatly. If you start with cold ingredients, you will not have to wait for the soup to chill. The soup’s color ranges from pale pink to deep fuchsia, depending on how long the beets mingle with the rest of the ingredients.

Serves 4 to 6
1/2 cup sour cream (or yogurt if you want low-fat)
1 quart buttermilk
1 large cucumber, peeled and seeded (or use unpeeled English cukes, no seeding)
1 (one pound) jar pickled beets (about 2 cups), drained
1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
A few sprigs of fresh dill
Optional garnishes: thinly sliced radishes, sliced hard-boiled egg, scallions, chopped cold, cooked shrimp

1. Spoon 1/4 cup sour cream or yogurt into a large bowl. Gradually whisk in the buttermilk until the mixture is smooth.

2. Cut the cucumber into small (1/4 to 3/8-inch) cubes. Cut the beets into the same size cubes and add them to the bowl with the buttermilk. Season with salt and lots of freshly ground black pepper, stir, and taste. Adjust seasoning. Chill in the refrigerator or stir in a couple of ice cubes if you are in a hurry.

3. Ladle the cold soup into bowls and float a spoonful of the remaining sour cream on top. Top with one or more of the following garnishes: sliced radishes, sliced hard-boiled egg, sliced scallions, and/or chopped cooked shrimp. Snip a little fresh dill over the top and serve.

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