
Beet Risotto

1 bunch	beets with greens (~1 ½ pounds)
6 cups	low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth (or 4 cups and 2 cups water)
5 tbsp	balsamic vinegar, divided
2 tbsp	extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp	butter
1 small	sweet onion, like Vidalia, cut into 1 inch cubes
2 cups	Arborio rice
¼ tsp	Celtic sea salt
¼ tsp	pepper
½ cup	grated parmesan cow or goats cheese, optional

Remove greens from beets; cut off and discard stems. Scrub beets; place in a saucepan large enough to hold them in a single layer. Add broth and if necessary, enough water to just cover them. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to a gentle boil and cook until the tip of a sharp knife can be easily inserted into the beets; 30-45 minutes. Meanwhile, wash beet greens well and cut into ½ inch strips.

Transfer the beets with a slotted spoon to a cutting board to cool. Measure the cooking liquid; either add water or reduce over high heat to get 6 cups in total. Slice off beet ends and slip off skins (wear rubber gloves to avoid purple hands). Cut the beets into ¼ inch dice; transfer to a medium bowl and gently mix with 2 tablespoons vinegar. Set aside.

Heat oil and butter in a Dutch oven or deep skillet over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, about 3 minutes. Add rice, increase heat to medium-high and cook, stirring constantly, until add the rice is opaque, about 1 minute. Add the remaining 3 tablespoons vinegar and 1 cup reserved beet-cooking liquid. Stir until almost all the liquid has been absorbed, adjusting the heat as necessary to maintain a simmer, about 4 minutes. Continue to add the beet broth, 1 cup at a time, stirring after each addition until all the liquid has been absorbed.

Add the reserved beet greens to the rice along with the final cup of broth. Cook, stirring until the greens are wilted, about 2 minutes. Add the reserved beets and continue stirring until all the liquid has been absorbed, about 2 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper. Serve with parmesan cheese, if desired. Makes 8 1-cup servings.

Adapted from *Eating Well*, February/March 2006.

Nutritional Value of Select Ingredients

Beets – The beetroot is an excellent source of folic acid, and a great source of fibre, manganese, and potassium. It is an excellent tonic for the liver, has anti-cancer properties, increase bowel function, and decrease cholesterol levels. The greens are even higher in nutritional value than the roots; they are rich in calcium, iron, and vitamins A and C.

Arborio Rice – Rich in complex carbohydrates, good quality proteins, yet low in fat and calories. Rice can help to regulate bowel function, glucose metabolism, prevent bowel cancer, and lower cholesterol.

Onions – Because they are high in sulfur, onions help lower cholesterol, inhibit cancerous tumor growth, help manage diabetes, and are an anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and antifungal food that are also a blood tonic. Eat them daily – raw or cooked.

Olive Oil – Cold pressed extra virgin olive oil is an excellent source of monounsaturated fatty acids, making this oil quite stable for medium temperature cooking. It has a good variety of vitamins and minerals, and can help lower LDL cholesterol, control blood pressure, and aid in diabetes.