



## WINTER BOOSTER BEETROOT SALAD

Lee Harrison  
Mobile Science Education

**This salad is wonderful with hot or cold roast beef.**

Beetroot is a rich source of *betaine*, important for cardiovascular health. Beetroot's high nitrate content has been shown to lower blood pressure and, recently, to improve muscle efficiency in athletes.

It is commonly assumed that beetroot's red colour comes from anthocyanins, the same pigment in red cabbage, but this is untrue. Beetroot's colour comes from two pigments: purple betacyanin and yellow betaxanthin, known together as betalins (or Betanin, food additive E162).

### INGREDIENTS

One bunch of baby beetroot  
Wedge of your favourite feta cheese  
Half a kilo fresh walnuts in shell  
A drizzle of olive oil

### EQUIPMENT

Knife  
Aluminium foil  
Roasting pan  
Fork  
Chopping board  
Nutcracker  
Serving platter  
Baking tray or fry pan

### METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. Slice the roots off the beetroots about 1cm from the bulb and trim the stalks closely (keep the leaves - see footnote below for why). Wash them well to remove grit. Wrap each beetroot bulb in foil and place in a roasting pan. Roast for approximately 35 minutes or until beets are tender when pierced with a fork.
3. Shell the walnuts, place on a baking tray in a 175°C hot oven for 10 minutes and roast till golden. Or dry-fry them on the stovetop until lightly browned and warmed through.
4. Chop walnuts coarsely and using your hands break feta into rough chunks.
5. Unwrap and peel the beetroot. You will get messy - enjoy it.
6. Slice the beetroot into wedges, arrange on a serving platter and scatter with feta and cooled roasted walnuts.
7. Drizzle beetroot with virgin olive oil to taste - a plain oil is good, or if you prefer, a lemon-infused oil can cut through some of the earthiness of the beetroot.

### FOOTNOTE: BEETROOT LEAVES - AN EXCELLENT ALTERNATIVE TO SPINACH

Lightly fry some chopped garlic and sliced Portobello mushrooms. Add a handful of chopped bacon and a sprinkling of cracked black pepper and fry until fragrant. Add large handfuls of washed and torn beetroot leaves to the pan with a dash of lemon juice or water and keep turning it over with the other ingredients until the volume has reduced and the leaves are wilted but bright. Serve immediately with crusty bread.

### FROM THE MARKET

Carrots, Beetroot and Olive Oil – Virgara's Garden and Patlin Gardens  
Feta – Alexandrina Cheese Company, Woodside Cheese Wrights  
Walnuts – Brookman's Food Forest