Recipes to 'beet' the summer heat

Veggie of the Week

Sage Hahn

July 25, 204

As we continue into the hot humidity of July, it's hard to keep cool, let alone think of what to cook for dinner. When it comes to bringing the joy back into warm summer nights, no veggie is better than a bright red beet. Beets are sweet and have a soft texture that children love — and adults do, too.

These root vegetables are shown to lower blood pressure and reduce inflammation — a good thing to keep you going in the humid summer season. Not to mention they're delicious, all on their own or with a little something extra. Are you thinking sweet or savory for this week's meal?

Brown sugar glazed beets

This recipe is sweet and simple. It creates a perfect side dish, or dessert, for any summer dinner.

You will need: 3 tablespoons brown sugar; 2 tablespoons orange juice; 1 tablespoon butter; 3 cups steamed and cubed beets. To prepare beets, remove their leaves, but don't throw them away. They can be kept and eaten just like spinach or another leafy green. Peel the beets with a vegetable peeler, chop them into pieces and steam either on the stove in a steamer basket placed over 1 inch of water for 15 minutes, or in the microwave by placing in a container with 2 tablespoons of water and microwaving on high for 8 to 10 minutes. Combine the brown sugar, orange juice, butter, salt, and pepper to taste in a large skillet. Cook on medium until the sugar and butter are both melted and the mixture is bubbling. Stir in your beets and simmer for 6 to 8 minutes until the liquid is mostly gone and your beets are covered in that sweet glaze goodness. Serve up to guaranteed delight.

Beet, arugula and goat cheese grilled cheese

For a fun lunch or dinner this week try this recipe — it's familiar enough that kids will love it, but a little more gourmet than your average cheese and sliced bread, not to mention they are a whole lot better for you.

For four sandwiches you will need: 1 to 2 beets, depending on size; arugula; olive oil; goat cheese; butter; and your favorite sandwich bread. Sliced French bread is a great choice. Peel and slice your beets into rounds. Toss with a little olive oil, salt, and bake, turning once in a 375F oven for 20 to 30 minutes, until tender. Next, butter your bread and stack your sandwich up. Spread on goat cheese, then arugula and finally, the beets on top. Top with another slice of buttered bread and cook in a pan until golden brown. These special sandwiches are so beautiful; slice them up and serve immediately. Your family will have forgotten about the heat in no time.

Sage Hahn is an intern at the Shafeek Nader Trust and Fit Together. She will be writing Vegetable of the Week columns for The Winsted Journal for the rest of the summer.

Send news and photos to editor@winstedjournal.com