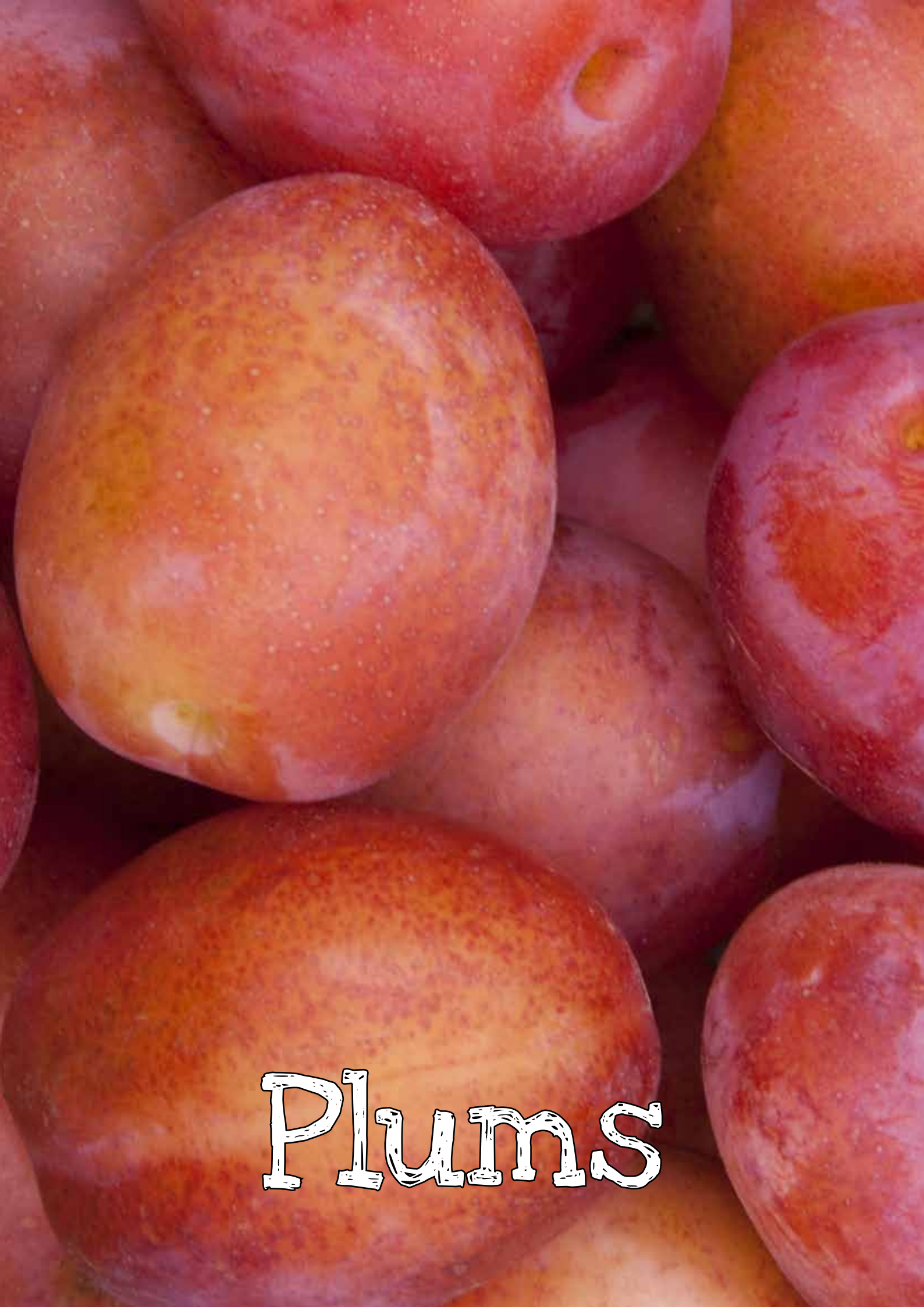




Plums



Plums



Are they a fruit or a vegetable?

Plums are stone fruits and belong to the Rose family, like cherries, pears and apples.

How do they grow?

Plums grow on trees.

Where do they grow?

Plum trees are grown throughout the world and China, Serbia and the US are the biggest producers. About 100 varieties of plums are grown in the US, 50 of which are grown in Northern California. Other plum producing states are Oregon, Washington, Michigan, and Idaho.

When are they in season?

Plums are in season from mid-May to early October.

What should you look for?

Plums are ready to eat when they feel slightly soft if you give them a gentle squeeze.

How do you store them?

Store them at room temperature until they are ripe, then keep them in the fridge.

How can you eat them?

You can eat plums raw or you can cook them, either by stewing them slowly with a little sugar, or by grilling them and serving them with yogurt for a tasty treat. You can also make plum sauce to go with duck or pork.

Why are they good for you?

Plums are full of goodness. The skin contains lots of vitamins, minerals and fiber. Fiber is very important in our diets because it keeps our digestive system healthy and helps keep us feeling full so we don't eat too much.



Did you know?

- ★ Plums develop their best flavour if left to ripen on the tree.
- ★ Plum trees are grown on every continent except Antarctica.
- ★ There are more than 2,000 varieties of plum. The most popular in the US is the Santa Rosa plum.

Always check the label on your fruit or veg label and remember, the closer it was grown to home, the fresher and tastier it will be!



Spiced plums with yogurt

Serves 6

- ★ 8 ripe plums
- ★ 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon
- ★ 2 tablespoons honey
- ★ 1½ cups plain yogurt

Use a small sharp knife to carefully cut all the way around one plum, in a circle. Hold the plum in your hands and twist until you can pull the two halves apart, then use a teaspoon to scoop out the pit. Carefully slice the plum into quarters and place in a bowl, then repeat with the rest. Sprinkle pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon over the plums and drizzle over the honey.

Divide the plums between 6 bowls and serve each one with a large spoonful of yogurt on the side.



Equipment

- ★ knife
- ★ teaspoon
- ★ measuring spoons
- ★ mixing bowl
- ★ 6 bowls, for serving

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

This lesson is about getting students to taste and enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables while learning about where they come from and why they are good for you. We want students to understand how important and fun it is to eat well.

Use this recipe to get your class to see, touch, smell and taste some gorgeous, juicy plums. Even if they can't help with the preparation, get them stirring in the honey and mixing in the spices. Get as many students involved as possible and make it fun!



Plums



Lesson plan for teachers

Key facts

- ★ Plums are stone fruits. They are members of the Rose family and closely related to cherries, pears and apples.
- ★ There are two types of plum - European and Japanese. European plums, which are thought to have originated by the Caspian Sea, are sweeter than Japanese plums, which came from China and are more tart.
- ★ Plums are now grown all over the world, but most come from California, Mexico, Serbia and China.
- ★ Plums are full of goodness. The skin contains lots of vitamins, minerals and fiber. Fiber is very important in our diets because it keeps our digestive system healthy and helps keep us feeling full, so we don't eat too much.

Additional activities

Stone fruit tasting

You will need:

- ★ knife
- ★ chopping board
- ★ stone fruit of at least 3 different types and varieties, for example: plums (damson, mirabelle), peaches (yellow, white), nectarines, apricots and cherries
- ★ plates and napkins

Cut most of the fruit into wedges and place onto clearly labelled plates. Put an uncut fruit next to each plate so students can see how they look whole. Get students to take a sample of each, then ask them to compare the taste and texture of each sample together. Ask students which they prefer and why. Discuss what a stone fruit is and how to tell if they're ripe.

Note: There are lots of different types and varieties of stone fruit. Buy whatever fruit is available near you and if possible, use the farmer's market so students can see what's grown locally.

Ripe plums test

You will need:

- ★ brown paper bags
- ★ unripe plums

Place half of the unripe plums in a brown paper bag. Leave the bag and the remaining plums at room temperature away from direct sunlight. Explain to the students that ethylene is the natural gas that fruit releases as it ripens, which makes it become sweeter, softer, and change color. By putting the fruit in a brown paper bag, the plums ripen quicker because the ethylene is contained and the paper allows oxygen to circulate. A plastic bag also helps the fruit to ripen but does not allow the oxygen to circulate – this creates more moisture in the bag and increases the chance of the fruit rotting.

Pass around plums that have been ripened in a brown bag along with the plums that have ripened naturally – ask students if they can tell the difference between them.



Lettuce



Lettuce



Is it a fruit or a vegetable?

Lettuce is a leafy vegetable. There are lots of different varieties, including boston, romaine, watercress, arugula and radicchio. They all look and taste different.

How does it grow?

Lettuce is easy to grow. All the seeds need to grow is a bed of soil, natural sunlight and regular watering. Give it a go!

Where does it grow?

Cool temperatures are ideal for growing lettuces. Most lettuce is grown outside to get the best of the sun. There are more than 50 varieties of salad leaves and about 90% of the lettuce in the US is grown primarily in California and Arizona.

When is it in season?

Lettuce is available throughout the year but the natural growing season is from April to October in some parts of California and November to March in Arizona and other parts of California.

What should you look for?

Choose lettuce heads that do not appear wrinkly or have wilted leaves. Choose those with outer leaves that look healthy and are vividly colored. They should also be compact, firm and symmetrical in shape.

How do you store it?

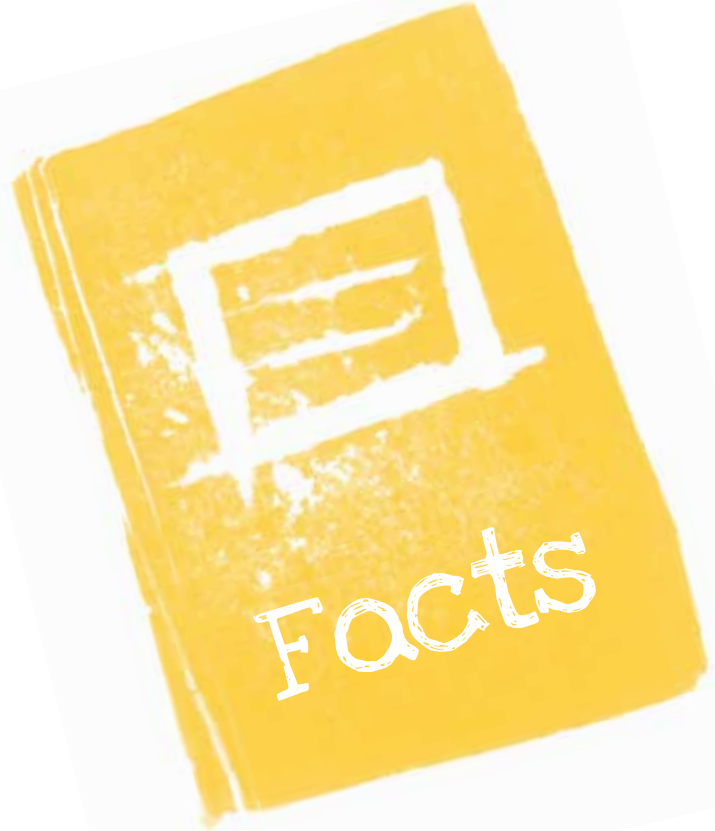
Lettuce is best stored in the vegetable box of the fridge. Typically, iceberg lettuce will last up to two weeks, romaine for about ten days, and leaf lettuce for about a week.

How can you eat it?

Lettuce is usually eaten as part of a salad. You can use different varieties to create all sorts of lovely salads – think about texture, taste and color.

Why is it good for you?

The nutritional value of lettuce varies greatly from leaf to leaf. Leaves that are darker in color usually have a higher nutritional value. However, all types of lettuce contain lots of water. Water is vital for everything our body does.



Did you know?

- ★ Lettuce was originally grown for medicinal purposes rather than to be eaten. The first Roman Emperor, Augustus, who ruled from 27 BC to 14 AD was said to have been cured of a serious illness by eating lettuce.
- ★ Lettuce is meant to contain a natural chemical that helps you sleep. Romans ate lettuce at the end of a dinner to help calm their stomach and make them sleepy.
- ★ Iceberg lettuce was developed in the USA and got its name from the way it was packed with ice to survive transportation in warm temperatures.

Always check the label on your fruit or veg and remember, the closer it was grown to home, the fresher and tastier it will be!



Everyday chopped green salad

Serves 6

- ★ 4 green onions
- ★ ½ a cucumber
- ★ a few sprigs of fresh basil
- ★ 2 small ripe avocados
- ★ 1 butter lettuce, or lettuce of your choice
- ★ 1 bag or a few large handfuls of sprouted cress or alfalfa
- ★ 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ★ 1 lemon
- ★ sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

It's best to start chopping the harder, crunchier veg first – trim the ends off the spring onions and cucumber then carefully chop up.

Pick and chop the basil leaves and bring to the centre of the board along with the spring onions and cucumber, continue chopping and mixing everything together as you go.

Use a knife to carefully cut around the length of the avocado, slicing as deep as the pit. Hold the avocado in your hands and twist until you can pull the two halves apart, then use a spoon to scoop out the pit. Do the same with the other avocado, then squeeze the avocado flesh out of their skin onto the board and throw away the skin.

Separate and wash the lettuce leaves, then spin dry in a salad spinner or wrap in a tea towel and shake dry. Snip in the cress or alfalfa, then continue chopping everything together.

When everything is chopped up nicely, you'll have a big mound of salad on the board. Make a well in the middle and add the oil. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze over the juice, holding your hand underneath to catch any pips, then add a tiny pinch of salt and pepper. Toss together so everything is nicely coated and serve on the board or in a bowl.



Equipment

- ★ chopping board
- ★ large knife
- ★ salad spinner or towel
- ★ scissors
- ★ measuring spoons
- ★ serving bowl or board

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

This lesson is about getting students to taste and enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables while learning about where they come from and why they are good for you. We want students to understand how important and fun it is to eat well.

Use this recipe to get your class to see, touch, smell and taste some crunchy lettuce. Get them involved with picking and washing the leaves, adding the seasoning and mixing everything together. Get as many students involved as possible and make it fun!

We're using green veg here but there are all sorts of different ingredients you can add to a chopped salad. You could mix things up by trying things like peppers, tomatoes, herb sprigs and even different cheeses.



Lettuce



Lesson plan for teachers

Key facts

- ★ Lettuce is a leafy vegetable and there are lots of different varieties.
- ★ Christopher Columbus took lettuce seeds to the US on his second voyage in 1493.
- ★ As the oldest known vegetable, it's thought that lettuce was first cultivated and exclusively grown by the Egyptians.
- ★ Lettuce grows all over the world, including Asia, US, Europe and Africa. Currently, the top three producers of lettuce are China, the US and India.
- ★ The nutritional value of lettuce varies greatly from leaf to leaf. Leaves that are darker in color usually have a higher nutritional value. However, all types of lettuce contain lots of water, which is vital for everything our body does. If you don't consume enough water, you will become dehydrated.

Additional activities

Lettuce tasting

You will need:

- ★ lettuce of at least 3 different varieties, for example: iceberg, boston, endive and romaine
- ★ plates and napkins

Click off and discard any tatty outer leaves then shred or rip most of the lettuces into bite-sized pieces. Wash well then spin dry in a salad spinner and place onto clearly labelled plates. Put lettuces that haven't been shredded beside the plates so students can see how they look whole. Get students to take a sample of each type of lettuce, then ask them to compare the taste and texture of each sample together. Ask students which type they prefer and why. Tell students that all of these lettuce varieties can be eaten raw and mixed together to make a more interesting salad.

Note: There are lots of different varieties of lettuce. Buy whatever lettuce is available near you and if possible, use the farmer's market so students can see what's grown locally.

Storyboard writing

Lettuce seeds are planted in greenhouses and then planted out in fields. Once they have been harvested, they're often packed immediately, then cooled to stop them from wilting. Discuss the features of a storyboard and write about the journey of a lettuce seed, from planting right through to eating the leaves.



Beets



Beets



Are they a fruit or a vegetable?

Beets are a vegetable and are related to other root vegetables like turnips and rutabaga.

How do they grow?

Beets grow from seeds that have been planted in the ground. In the US, the seeds are sown in the soil in the winter and spring and harvested during the fall months. Baby beets are picked early.

Where do they grow?

Beets came from the Mediterranean coasts of Europe, but are now grown all over the world.

When are they in season?

In the US, beets are in season from June to October.

What should you look for?

There are lots of different kinds of beets. The most common are the deep-purple ones. Look for firm beets with a deep color and healthy, green leaves.

How do you store them?

Store beets in the fridge.

How can you eat them?

Beets can be eaten raw in salad when finely sliced or grated. They can also be boiled, steamed or stir-fried, and are particularly tasty when roasted with a little balsamic vinegar and fresh herbs.

Why are they good for you?

Beets are a good source of folate, which is a B vitamin. We all need folate to help keep our blood healthy and build red blood cells. Without enough folate we can feel tired and depressed



Did you know?

- ★ Beets are often used as a natural red dye. You can get quite messy when preparing beets, so feel free to wear rubber gloves if you like. It's also a good idea to cook beets separately from other veg, or add them last to salads to stop them staining the other ingredients.
- ★ They're not often eaten, but beet leaves are edible and delicious added into a green salad.
- ★ You can get beets in a whole variety of colors, from white and yellow to a vivid candy-striped variety.

Always check the label on your fruit or veg and remember, the closer it was grown to home, the fresher and tastier it will be!



Raw beet salad

Serves 6

- ★ 4 good-sized raw beets, different colors if possible
- ★ sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ★ 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ★ 1 lemon
- ★ a few sprigs of fresh flat-leaf parsley
- ★ optional: 2.5oz feta or goat cheese

Pick the leaves off the beets then wash the beets thoroughly.

Using the coarse side of a box grater, grate the beets then add to a bowl and season with a tiny pinch of salt and pepper. Drizzle over the oil, then cut the lemon in half and squeeze over the juice, holding your hand underneath it to catch any pips.

Pick and chop the parsley leaves and scatter over the salad. Toss so everything is nicely coated and serve with crumbled feta over the top, if you like.



Equipment

- ★ box grater
- ★ bowl
- ★ measuring spoons
- ★ knife
- ★ chopping board

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

This lesson is about getting students to taste and enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables while learning about where they come from and why they are good for you. We want students to understand how important and fun it is to eat well.

Use this recipe to get your class to see, touch, smell and try some tasty beetroots. Even if they can't help with the preparation, get them picking and smelling the parsley leaves, adding the seasoning and oil and mixing everything together. Get as many students involved as possible and make it fun!

In this recipe, you don't use the beet leaves, although it's worth remembering that they are edible and taste great in mixed green salads. Beets can be a bit messy to prepare, so wear some rubber gloves if you want to.



Beets



Lesson plan for teachers

Key facts

- ★ You can get beets in a whole variety of colours, from white and yellow to a vivid candy-striped variety.
- ★ Beets are a vegetable. They are related to other root vegetables like turnips and rutabaga.
- ★ Beets came from the Mediterranean coasts of Europe but are now grown all over the world, including the US.
- ★ They're not often eaten, but beet leaves are edible and delicious picked into a green salad.
- ★ Beets are a good source of folate. Folate is needed to keep our blood healthy and helps to build red blood cells. Without enough folate we can feel tired and depressed.

Additional activities

Tie-dye

You will need:

- ★ beet juice (made by soaking peeled beets in water and salt)
- ★ a bucket
- ★ t-shirts or white handkerchiefs
- ★ rubber bands

Pour beet juice into a bucket and divide the t-shirts and rubber bands between the students. Get them to use the rubber bands to make knots in their t-shirt. Dip different parts of the t-shirt into the beet juice and leave them to dry, then remove the rubber bands and you'll have a tie-dye shirt!

You can place other vegetables or fruit in the juice and see how the colors change. For example, add yellow vegetable juice from onion skins and mix it with the beet liquid to make an orange color.

Magic writing

You will need:

- ★ bowls
- ★ baking soda
- ★ paint brushes
- ★ paper
- ★ beet juice (made by soaking peeled beets in water and salt)

Dissolve some baking soda in water. Get the students to write their names or secret messages using this solution. When the writing has dried, get the students to paint over it with beet juice, experimenting with different concentrations/shades. The writing will "magically" reveal itself. Explain that this happened because beets contain a substance called flavin, which changes colour depending on whether it is added to an acid or an alkali.