

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 45 minutes (optional, for roasting beets)

Total time: 1 hour 5 minutes (or 20 minutes if using pre-cooked beets)

Intensity Level: Easy

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Description

This vibrant and nourishing Anti-Inflammatory Beetroot Avocado Feta Salad is a celebration of color, texture, and flavor. It's more than just a salad; it's a powerful, delicious tool for wellness. Earthy, sweet roasted beets form the foundation, known for their anti-inflammatory properties and rich antioxidant content. Creamy, heart-healthy avocado adds a luxurious texture, while tangy, salty feta cheese provides a perfect counterpoint. Tossed with fresh, peppery arugula and a zesty lemon-herb vinaigrette, every bite is a step towards feeling your best. This salad is perfect as a light main course or a stunning side dish.

The Health Benefits

This recipe is meticulously crafted with ingredients known for their health-promoting qualities:

- **Beetroot:** Packed with betalains, powerful antioxidants with potent anti-inflammatory effects. They also support detoxification and healthy blood pressure.
- **Avocado:** A rich source of monounsaturated fats and vitamin E, both of which help reduce inflammation.
- **Feta Cheese:** While dairy can be inflammatory for some, feta (especially in moderation) provides a good source of protein and calcium. Its salty flavor means a little goes a long way.
- **Arugula:** A cruciferous vegetable containing glucosinolates, which have been studied for their anti-inflammatory and cancer-fighting properties.
- **Walnuts:** An excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, a key component in reducing inflammation.
- **Olive Oil:** The cornerstone of the Mediterranean diet, extra virgin olive oil is rich in oleocanthal, a compound with effects similar to ibuprofen.
- **Lemon:** Rich in vitamin C and flavonoids, which can help combat inflammation.

Ingredients

For the Salad:

- 4 medium fresh beetroots (approx. 500g/1lb), or 250g pre-cooked beetroot
- 1 tbsp olive oil (for roasting)
- 2 large, ripe avocados
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice (to prevent browning)
- 120g (4 oz) block of feta cheese, preferably Greek
- 100g (3.5 oz) fresh arugula (rocket)
- ½ cup walnuts, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp fresh dill, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp fresh mint, finely chopped

For the Lemon-Herb Vinaigrette:

- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 1 tsp raw honey or maple syrup (optional, for balance)
- Salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste

Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Beets (Roasting Method)

1. **Preheat & Prep:** Preheat your oven to 200°C (400°F). Wash the fresh beetroots thoroughly to remove any dirt. Trim the leafy tops, leaving about 2-3 cm of the stem. Do not peel them yet. Wrap each beetroot tightly in aluminum foil. Drizzle with a little olive oil before sealing.
2. **Roast:** Place the foil-wrapped beets on a baking sheet. Roast for 40-60 minutes, or until they are easily pierced with a knife. The time will depend on the size of the beets.
3. **Cool & Peel:** Once cooked, carefully remove them from the oven and let them cool in the foil for about 10-15 minutes. Once cool enough to handle, use a paper towel to rub the skin off. It should slip off easily. Cut the peeled beets into 1.5cm (½-inch) cubes. Set aside.

Shortcut: To save time, you can use high-quality pre-cooked beetroot. Simply drain and cube them.

Step 2: Make the Vinaigrette

1. In a small bowl or a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice, Dijon mustard, minced garlic, and honey or maple syrup (if using).
2. Whisk vigorously or shake the jar until the dressing is emulsified and slightly thickened.
3. Season with a generous pinch of salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Taste and adjust as needed. Set aside.

Step 3: Assemble the Salad

1. Prep the Avocado: Cut the avocados in half, remove the pit, and scoop the flesh into a medium bowl. Cut into 1.5cm (½-inch) cubes. Gently toss with 1 tablespoon of fresh lemon juice to prevent them from browning.
2. The Base: In a large salad bowl or on a large serving platter, create a bed of arugula.
3. Layer the Ingredients: Arrange the cubed roasted beets and avocado over the arugula. Crumble the feta cheese evenly over the top.
4. Add Crunch & Herbs: Sprinkle the chopped walnuts, fresh dill, and fresh mint over the salad.

5. Dress & Serve: Drizzle the prepared lemon-herb vinaigrette over the salad just before serving. Gently toss to combine, or serve it undressed for guests to help themselves. Be careful not to over-mix, to keep the avocado and beets intact.

Recipe Notes & Tips

- Roasting vs. Boiling Beets: Roasting concentrates the beets' natural sugars, resulting in a deeper, sweeter flavor. Boiling is faster but can dilute the flavor. Roasting is highly recommended for this recipe.
- Don't Toss Too Early: If you plan to have leftovers, dress only the portion you are serving. The avocado will brown and the arugula will wilt if left in the dressing for too long. Store the dressing separately.
- Make it a Main: To make this salad a more substantial meal, add a cup of cooked quinoa, farro, or a grilled protein like chicken or salmon.
- Nut-Free Option: For a nut-free version, simply omit the walnuts or substitute them with toasted pumpkin seeds (pepitas) for a similar crunch.
- Vegan Option: To make this salad vegan, omit the feta cheese or use a dairy-free feta alternative. Ensure your sweetener is maple syrup, not honey.

Nutrition Information

Disclaimer: Nutritional information is an estimate and will vary based on exact ingredients and serving sizes.

Per Serving (1/4 of the recipe):

- Calories: 420 kcal
- Total Fat: 36g
 - Saturated Fat: 8g
 - Monounsaturated Fat: 18g
 - Polyunsaturated Fat: 8g
- Cholesterol: 25mg
- Sodium: 380mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 18g
 - Dietary Fiber: 9g
 - Sugars: 8g
- Protein: 9g