**Festive Beet and Chickpea Salad**

**INGREDIENTS**

- 3 medium beets
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 sprig rosemary
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tsp salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 cups canned chickpeas, drained
- 1/2 red onion, sliced
- Juice of 1/2 lemon, 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan or feta crumbles

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Preheat Oven to 350. Set the beets, garlic and rosemary on a large piece of aluminum foil. Drizzle with 1 TBSP of the olive oil, sprinkle with some salt and pepper and add a splash of water.

2. Fold the foil into a pouch and seal the edges. Transfer to the oven and cook until the beets are easily pierced with a knife, 45 to 50 minutes. When done, remove beets from the pouch and set them aside to cool. With a paper towel rub the skins from the beets. Cut the peeled beets into bite-size cubes. Mince the roasted garlic.

3. Combine beets, garlic, chickpeas, red onion and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper. Drizzle with oil and toss in cheese and cilantro. Chill, and serve. Optional—top with chopped walnuts.

**SERVING SIZE:** 1/2 cup

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Beets are a great holiday ingredient due to their festive rich dark red color. That color also suggests rich health benefits.

Serving size 1/2 cup contains 56 calories, 7g Carb, 4g Protein, 3g Fat, 4g Fiber, 184 mg Sodium

Fresh beets present a double bounty; their greens and root bulbs both are edible. A one-cup serving of cooked beet greens is an excellent source of vitamins A and K, potassium and magnesium, and a good source of calcium. A cup of beetroot is an excellent source of folate, as well as a good source of fiber and potassium.

Research suggests the natural nitrate in vegetables and fruits, like in beets — which is reduced in our bodies to nitrite, nitric oxide and other metabolites — is partly responsible for heart-healthy benefits from a produce-packed diet, such as lowered blood pressure levels. (Food and Nutrition Magazine, 2015)