

COLD BEET SOUP

(Saltibarsciai)

Serves at least 10 for a wonderful dinner soup

This is an unusual version of the traditional Eastern Europe beet soup. This one is chilled, then served very cold with a garnish of hot potatoes cooked with onions and dill. When the garnish goes into the soup, the result is stupendous. Only the Lithuanians!

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| 10 beets, about 3-3½ pounds, with greens | $\frac{3}{4}$ cup distilled white vinegar <i>larger vinegar</i> |
| 3½ quarts water | Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste |
| 2 medium cucumbers, peeled and coarsely julienned | 1 pint sour cream |
| ¼ cup finely chopped fresh dill or ⅛ cup dry dill | 2-41 sugar |

GARNISH (You have to about quadruple this for amount of beet soup)

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| 2 russet potatoes, boiled until just tender | 4 tablespoons butter |
| 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and finely chopped | 4 tablespoons vegetable oil |
| | 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill or two tsp. dry |

Remove and save the beet greens for another use. Leave 1 inch of the stem on the beets to prevent excess bleeding. Scrub the beets clean and place them in a 5- to 6-quart pot. Cover with 3½ quarts of water, bring to a boil, and simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes or until just tender.

Drain the beets, reserving the beet water, and allow to cool. *add dry dill to beet water.* Strain the water, making sure to remove any dirt that may have clung to the beets. Set it aside.

Trim and peel the beets and cut 8 of them into short julienne. Grate the remaining 2 beets on the coarse side of a hand grater.

In a 6- to 8-quart stainless steel pot, combine 3 quarts of the reserved beet water, the beets, cucumbers, dill, vinegar, and salt and pepper. In a separate bowl, whip the sour cream with 1 cup of the reserved water. Mix until smooth, add to the pot, and stir in. Chill several hours.

Peel and dice the potatoes.

Sauté the onion in the butter and oil until clear. Add the potatoes and dill, and toss until hot.

Serve the potato mixture on the side as a garnish for the cold soup.