

## I've got Obama beat on beets

### From the food editor

I see eye to eye with President Barack Obama on several issues and disagree with him on others. I'm hoping I can sway him when it comes to a contentious culinary issue: beets.

Obama publicly declared his dislike of this root (much like the first President Bush did with broccoli crowns). I have many friends in the anti-beet camp and counted myself as a member until a few restaurant experiences swayed me to the other side.

There are many reasons to eat beets. The beetroot (the greens are edible as well) is a good source of folic acid, fiber, manganese and potassium. The pigment that gives beets their rich reddish-purple color contains powerful cancer-fighting betacyanin. While garnet is the most available color of beet, they also come in gold and "candy cane" (red and white concentric circles) varieties.

Health benefits aside, there are tasty ways to prepare beets.

You can peel it and grate it into salads, or use beet greens on a plate with other salad greens.

Just the other weekend, I tried a roasted beet salad with oranges, feta and balsamic vinaigrette at HB Home Bistro in Chicago. Chef Joncarl Lachman roasts the beets to mellow the bitter notes and intensify the sweetness, then chills them and dices them before tossing them with the other ingredients. The combination had me wishing the plate were bigger.

Through FoodieView.com, a Google-like portal for recipe and restaurant sites, you can find dozens of ways to prepare beets, among them Beet Ravioli With Poppy Seed Butter, Beet Carpaccio With Goat Cheese and Mint Vinaigrette, Roasted Beets With Horseradish Cream, Beet and Goat Cheese Crostini and Swedish Pickled Beet and Apple Salad.

Do you have a favorite way to prepare beets? Join the group Daily Herald Food fans through Facebook.com to share the recipe. I'll see if I can get them to Obama's people.

**Passing time with Paso Robles:** Explore dozens of wines from California's verdant and growing Paso Robles region from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, at the River East Arts Center, 435 W. Illinois St., Chicago.

You'll be able to sample wines from Adelaida Cellars, Clayhouse Wines, Kenneth Volk Vineyards, Niner Wine Estates, Tablas Creek Vineyard and Treana Winery, among others, while noshing on artisanal cheeses and passed hors d'oeuvres. Lest you think these wines are out of the budget, there will be two tables devoted to regional reds and whites that retail for less than \$20 a bottle. I can think of much worse ways to

spend a Tuesday evening.

Tickets for the Grand Tasting cost \$45; \$55 at the door. If you purchase a pair by Friday, Feb. 27, the two will cost just \$75. Get tickets at (800) 549-9463 or pasowine.com.

**Fishing for recipes:** The Lenten season is under way and if you're looking for new recipes and wondering which varieties of fish support a healthy planet, the Viking Cooking School in Glenview has a course for you.

From 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, March 19, chef Christopher Green will lead a hands-on cooking class that will cover cooking methods for various types of fish, making a seafood stew, working with sushi-grade fish and cleaning and cooking shellfish. In addition, students will gain insight on how to determine the freshness of fish and the importance of buying seafood from sustainable sources.

The class costs \$109, including wine and samples of the recipes created in class. The class will be repeated on Wednesday, April 1 (no foolin'). The Viking School is at 1140 N. Milwaukee Ave. Register at (847) 350-0705 or viking-cookingschool.com.

— Deborah Pankey

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