

# BEET SALAD with Fennel, Orange, & Feta

Serves 6

¼ cup hazelnuts, toasted, husked, halved

2 large (3-inch diameter) red beets, all but 1 inch of tops trimmed

2 large (3-inch diameter) golden beets, all but 1 inch of tops trimmed

6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided

8 sprigs of fresh thyme (optional)

salt and pepper

1 small shallot, finely chopped

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

coarse salt

freshly ground white pepper

4 oranges

1 small fresh fennel bulb, trimmed, quartered, cored, cut into paper-thin strips

4 cups salad leaves in season (gem lettuces, arugula, treviso, mache, watercress, etc.)

1½ cups coarsely crumbled feta cheese

¼ cup finely shredded fresh mint

¼ cup finely sliced fresh Italian parsley



Preheat oven to 400°F and toast the hazelnuts for about ten minutes. Remove the husks from the nuts by rolled them vigorously in a clean towel. Slightly break up the nuts in a mortar and pestle and set them aside.

Place the beets in 9x9x2-inch baking dish. Drizzle 3 tablespoons oil over; sprinkle with salt and pepper (and thyme, if using) and toss to coat. Cover pan with foil and roast until tender, about 1 to 1½ hour, depending on the size of the beets. Uncover and cool completely. Peel beets, cut them into wedges. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cover and set aside. To keep the red beets from coloring the orange beets with their juice, keep them in a separate bowl.

To make the dressing, finely mince the shallot. Add it to a mixture of three parts olive oil to one part balsamic vinegar. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Cut all peel and pith off the oranges. Work over a bowl to catch orange juice and cut between membranes, releasing segments. Separate the juice from the oranges and mix it with the dressing. In a bowl, combine the oranges with finely chopped fennel. Then add about half of the dressing.

Mound salad leaves on a large platter. Arrange orange segments and beets on top of the leaves. Sprinkle with Feta cheese, mint, parsley and hazelnuts. Drizzle with the remaining dressing. Serve immediately after dressing.