

Beets with Shallot Cream Sauce

serves 6-8

Rich, nourishing, and delicious. This is a great side dish for any autumn or winter meal. When I feel the need for extra nourishment, I prepare this dish and soak up the iron and other nutrients. Anything that color MUST be full of great things! Add the richness of the cream sauce and I'm left singing praises.

2 lbs. beets, preferably 2" diameter or less
1 T. butter plus 1 T. additional
1 T. fresh lemon juice

2 T. finely minced shallots
1 T. unbleached white flour
1 cup heavy cream
pinch salt, to taste

Scrub the beets, trim the root end (the long, pointy one) if it is long, down to an inch or so, and trim the top (where the stems of the greens might be protruding), down to a half inch. You can cook the beets one of two ways. To roast the beets, place them on a dry sheet pan, cover with foil or a lid, and bake in a 350° oven until tender. Depending on size this will take from 45 minutes to as long as 2 hours. To steam or boil the beets, place over or in boiling water until tender, 20 minutes to an hour. Set aside.

Melt the 1 T. butter in a small sauce pan on medium heat. Add the minced shallots and sauté until the shallots are sizzling, somewhat translucent, and appear to be soft, approximately 4-5 minutes. Add the other tablespoon butter and the 1 T. flour and stir well. Cook for 2 minutes so that the raw flour taste is transformed into a nutty, buttery, pleasant flavor. Slowly but vigorously stir in the heavy cream with a wooden spoon, scraping the bottom edges of the pan thoroughly to prevent clumping of the flour. When all the cream has been added, stir the sauce well. If you see any flour clumps, press them with the back of your spoon to incorporate them into the sauce. Bring the sauce to a simmer (small boil), and cook for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Meanwhile, peel the beets. Often, the skins simply rub off with your fingers. If not, using a paring knife. Either leave the beets whole or cut into chunks or wedges, whatever size pleases you. Add the lemon juice and stir. Place the beets into the hot cream sauce, Heat the mixture for 1-2 minutes. Enjoy the vividly beautiful marriage of the red beets and the white cream sauce...a shocking pink pond with bobbing red islands. Almost as much pleasure to look at as it is to eat! Be sure to sop up the extra sauce with a chunk of crusty bread. Enjoy.