Roasted Beet and Goat Cheese Barley Bake

One 8×12 in (20×30 cm) dish, at least 3 qt/2.8 L;4 grain-and-vegetable main portions · Active 35 min · Total 1 hr 55 min

Ingredients

- 1 lb 2 oz raw beets, peeled and cut in 3/4-in/2-cm cubes (500 g prepared)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (30 ml), divided
- 1/4 teaspoon fine salt (1.5 g), divided
- 3/4 cup dry pearled barley, rinsed (150 g)
- 4 cups water (960 ml), for barley; more only if needed to keep covered
- 1 medium onion, chopped (150 g)
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped (3 g)
- 3 1/2 oz baby spinach (100 g), washed and dried or label-ready-to-eat
- 1 can white beans, drained and rinsed (8 1/2 oz/240 g drained)
- 2/3 cup low-sodium vegetable stock (160 ml)
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar (15 ml)
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 1/2 oz pasteurized soft goat cheese (100 g), divided

Set out

Oven, 8×12 in (20×30 cm) baking dish, at least 3 qt/2.8 L, Rimmed baking sheet, Saucepan, Fine sieve, 12-in/30-cm skillet, Broad spoon, Food thermometer

Allergens

Milk, Barley: contains gluten; check stock labels. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat oven to 425°F (220°C). Toss beet cubes with 15 ml oil and half the salt on the sheet. Roast 30–40 minutes, turning once, until nearly tender to a knife.

2. Meanwhile bring barley and its 960 ml water to a boil in the saucepan. Simmer 35–45 minutes or per packet until tender with a little chew, adding water if needed to keep covered. Drain thoroughly.

3. Heat remaining 15 ml oil in the skillet over medium-low heat. Soften onion 7–9 minutes, add garlic 30 seconds, then spinach. Cook 2–3 minutes until wilted and loose water has evaporated. Add beans, drained barley, stock, vinegar, remaining salt and pepper. Stir gently 3 minutes until hot. Take off heat and stir in 50 g goat cheese, then fold in roasted beets.

4. Lower oven to 400°F (205°C). Spread hot mixture in the baking dish and put it on the rimmed sheet. Crumble remaining 50 g goat cheese in small pockets over the surface. Bake 20–25 minutes until the center and several other spots reach 165°F (74°C). Rest 5 minutes and serve four portions.

Color transfer is part of this dish

Rosy barley and pink-tinted beans are expected with red beets. The white goat-cheese pockets give contrast without requiring a fresh garnish not present in the recipe.

A useful detail

The 115-minute total includes peeling and cubing beets, overlapping roasting and barley simmering, the onion-spinach stage, assembly, baking and rest. Follow a longer barley packet time if needed rather than transferring hard-centered grain to the oven.

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F (32°C), at 40°F (4°C) or below. Use within 3 days or an earlier cheese deadline. Reheat to 165°F (74°C), adding a small splash of water if barley has absorbed the sauce. Freeze promptly cooled portions for up to 2 months for quality; thaw in the refrigerator. Cheese texture may change.