

## Moroccan beetroot salad

'Kemia' – various salads, often made with cooked vegetables – are served at the start of a Moroccan meal, a bit like tapas in Spain or meze in Turkey. They are always beautifully presented, to stimulate the appetite, and subtly spiced with classic Moroccan flavours such as mint, parsley, pepper, cumin, cinnamon and citrus. The beauty for the cook is that you can prepare them all in advance and serve them at room temperature.



Of course, if you prefer you can roast the beetroots rather than boil them: Place them, whole and unpeeled, in a roasting tin with a splash of olive oil and water. Sprinkle with salt, cover tightly with foil and roast in a hot oven until tender throughout. I feel this method works better with summer beetroot, and those at the start of the winter season. These days boiling seems preferable.

This would probably never happen in Morocco, but I like to serve this salad over a bed of full-fat plain yoghurt. The flavours go so well together, and the beetroot juices bleed into the yoghurt creating bright pink streaks and swirls.

**Serves: 4-6 as one of a selection of salads to start a meal**

**Total time: 2-3 hours start to finish**

**Active time: 30 mins max**

600g (4-5) beetroots, washed and left whole, unpeeled

3 tbsps olive oil

2 tbsps red wine vinegar

zest of half a large orange

3 tbsps freshly squeezed orange juice

½ tsp icing (powdered) sugar

½ tsp cinnamon

¼ tsp cayenne

3 tbsps chopped mint

salt and pepper to taste

whole, plain yoghurt to serve (optional)

1. Boil beetroots in salted water until tender, 1-2 hours depending on their size. When tender through to their cores, drain and leave to cool off slightly.

2. Meanwhile whisk all other ingredients (except yoghurt) together in a bowl.
3. As soon as beetroots are cool enough to handle, rub their skins off using a paper towel or cloth you don't mind staining purple. While still warm, chop into small cubes and mix with the prepared vinaigrette. Check seasoning and add more salt and pepper as desired.
4. Leave to sit for an hour so the flavours blend, or chill and bring back to room temperature later. Serve as is, or spooned over some yoghurt on a platter.

