

Advanced Composition

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**Super-healthy alternative to processed food in 10 minutes:**

**Beetroot smoothie as I like it**



According to Dosomething.org, 25% of the American population consume some kind of fast food on a daily basis. It seems that such eating habits do have some advantages – preparing your own meal can be quite time-consuming and exhausting, especially if you are expected to do

that after a very long and tiring day at work. One thing is certain: a Big Mac hamburger or a portion of French fries and chicken nuggets *will* soothe your empty stomach, plus you won't have to deal with five burnt pots, seven scorched pans and a ton of dirty silverware afterwards! But the question is do we really satisfy our *need for food* by eating junk?

The main problem with fast-food consumption is that our body does not recognize much of its nutritional value. Why? First of all, because it is processed, and being such it loses most of its nutritive features, which makes it useless for our body. Secondly, processing also alters the taste, so in order to make our food tasty and edible again, processed food makers have to add artificial additives, preservatives, hormones, etc., which confuse the human body, obstruct the normal life cycle and in the long run can cause many health issues starting with mild allergies and ending with cancer. Most of the people who consume junk food justify their unfortunate choices by the lack of time to prepare a healthy meal themselves. Therefore, I decided to present here a very simple recipe which combines milk, fresh fruits, vegetables and grains to create a perfectly balanced meal: beetroot smoothie.

### **What on Earth is a smoothie?**

A smoothie is a creamy, milkshake-like meal with a liquid base, combined with blended raw fruits and vegetables. It originated from the US West Coast in the 1930s, and was popularized during the seventies – ironically, by the not-healthy-at-all food retailer “Smoothie King”. Today, smoothies are popular world-wide. You can find literally hundreds of smoothie recipe books and thousands of recipes on the internet, and some websites even have 30-day detox challenges based on smoothie consumption!

The beetroot smoothie was the first smoothie I've ever tried. I started preparing it a couple of years ago, when I was diagnosed with anemia. The doctor suggested drinking fresh beet juice every morning for a couple of weeks, which I, being very much spoilt at that time, found so agonizing that I immediately started looking for the alternatives on the internet. That was when I discovered the smoothie recipe which featured milk, beets, bananas and grapes and decided to give it a chance. I fell in love at the first sip and have continued preparing different smoothie variations ever since.

To prepare a smoothie, I usually use cow milk and yogurt for the base, but for vegans, vegetarians and those who are lactose-intolerant, plant milks such as soy, coconut or almond milk, or simply water will also perfectly fit.

When it comes to fruits and vegetables (and this is one of the things I really adore about preparing smoothies) any combination that suits your senses is possible! If you are a beginner in this business, you will probably for some time just faithfully follow all the instructions from the recipe below, but once you figure out how certain combinations work together, you will be able to express your own culinary creativity and have a really great time experimenting with different tastes and colors. The following recipe came as the result of one such experiment.

### **Why would anyone like to make a BEETROOT smoothie?**

Beetroot is a very powerful antioxidant, significant source of vitamins and minerals, the consumption of which has multiple benefits for our health. Beets are proven to lower cholesterol, they help us beat the red blood cell deficiency, and are also effective in leukemia and cancer treatments.

If you are a vegetarian, beets should be at your table at least a couple of times a week, because they are very rich in B12 vitamin rarely found in vegetables, and whose consumption is essential to preserve certain brain functions, and to prevent memory loss and depression. Yes, the lack of essential minerals and vitamins in our nutrition can lead to depression.

This smoothie has sweet and fruity aroma, which makes it very pleasurable to eat. Another thing about it is its color - very intensive and inviting Barbie pink - kids just adore it and are usually very eager to try this liquid sensation as promptly as they see it! As the taste of the beet is completely camouflaged by the taste of other ingredients, this recipe is a perfect pick if you need a device to trick your kid into eating some real food instead.

Smoothies can also serve as a good substitute for fruit or iced yogurts, which might seem like real food because of the "yogurt" part in their title, but often are just another variant of processed, sweetened junk.

### **And if you need to skip the beets...**

In case you need to skip the beets for whatever reason, this recipe will still work for you! Just omit the beets, add other ingredients, and you will still get a very delicious meal! Alternatively, you may try adding a tomato or half a pound of red cabbage.

However, if your reason for omitting the beets is its distinctive taste, I suggest just proceeding with the recipe as it is, with beets included. As I've already mentioned, the beet aroma is completely neutralized by other ingredients and I promise you won't feel it at all.

## Let's get it done!

To make a beetroot smoothie, you will need:

Ingredient	Needed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yogurt	🔥 5 oz.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Milk	🔥 3.5 oz.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beetroot	🔥 1, mid-sized
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Apple	🔥 1 mid-sized or 2 small
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Banana	🔥 1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carrot	🔥 1 smaller
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oat bran	🔥 1 spoon

*Level: Super-easy*

*No. of Servings ≈ two 6.5 oz. portions*

*Preparation time: 10 minutes*



Besides the ingredients, you will also need the following kitchen tools:

- a blender or electric food chopper,
- a vegetable peeler and
- a knife.

The preparation procedure is very simple! It consists of four plain steps and will not take more than 10 minutes of your time. Here is all you have to do:

### Procedure

- Step 1** peel and cut beetroot, apples, carrot and banana to smaller pieces
- Step 2** put them all in blender,
- Step 3** add milk, yogurt and oat bran and
- Step 4** press the "mix" button!

After some 30 seconds of blending your healthy pinky meal will be ready for consumption!

### How to beat the structure of the carrot?

While beetroots, apples and bananas have lighter composition and easily turn into a paste when blended, carrots have very thick structure and rarely go creamy. So, if you do not have a very powerful, professional blender and are not comfortable with feeling those tiny carrot particles scratch your throat while having your smoothie, make sure to cook the carrot first.

I don't have a fancy blender, so I prefer to cook the carrots. I usually first cut them into smaller pieces, put them in a cooking pot, add some water and wait for it to boil. Once the carrots are cooked, you can add some of the water you used for cooking into the blender to make your smoothie even creamier. Cooked carrot will perfectly fuse with other ingredients and form a smooth and fluffy potion that will please all your senses.

### Tips on how to choose the right ingredients

As the point of preparing a smoothie is to have a healthy meal, here are some additional tips to pay attention to:

- I suggest using whole milk products, such as *Homestead Creamery*, *Mayfield*, *Horizon* or *Stoneyfield's* full-fat milks, instead of fat-reduced or skimmed milk for two reasons:
  1. skimmed and low-fat milks contain powdered milk substances which are proven to be carcinogenic, and
  2. they also contain additional amounts of bleached white sugar and artificial sweeteners which may cause type 2 diabetes.

- If you use veggie milks, especially soy milk, you should know that these milks often contain GMO substances. In order to avoid them, pay attention to get those products which are clearly labeled as GMO-free. *Eden Organic* or *Wildwood* are my suggestion.
- Red delicious or fuji apples are probably the best choice for this recipe, though you may use other kinds as well. However, if you do not use organic apples, make sure to remove the peel before putting them into the blender. Just think of all those fungicides and insecticides the producers use to stop that worm from digging inside. You don't want to eat that peel.
- If you find your smoothie not to be sweet enough, make sure not to add processed sugar. Use honey, stevia, agave or maple syrup instead.
- And last but not least: whatever you do, make sure to use fresh beetroot only! I once brilliantly tried to make this smoothie with the canned beets. Of course, it turned out to be a nauseating choice.

### Small tricks to modify the taste

There are a couple of ways to modify the taste of your smoothie without compromising the healthy part of it:

- Add some ginger into your blender. A half an inch ginger piece will make your smoothie taste more exotic, and will boost up your immunity as well!
- If you don't know what to do with excess winter stock of cinnamon, use it for your smoothie! Cinnamon is believed to be one of the most effective natural substances to stimulate fat-burn and can also be particularly useful to neutralize the smell of beetroot, in case you find it unpleasant.

- Use nuts. Almonds are my favorite, but hazelnuts, walnuts and even pistachios will also make a good combination with other ingredients. However, be careful with the amount you're adding if you want to keep the texture of the smoothie light - nuts have the tendency to "drink" the liquid from the smoothie and make it taste somewhat dry. You can also use nuts as the substitution for the oat bran, in case you are not an oat bran fan, or in case you simply don't have where to buy it.

### **“I don't want a smoothie, I want an ice-cream!”**

You want an ice-cream? Buzz! Junk food! If you feel like eating something frosty, you can give your smoothie a touch of iciness by substituting fresh bananas with frozen ones! This may sound weird, and you might think adding just ordinary ice cubes will be both simpler and also have the exact same effect, but that is not quite correct. In fact, while ice cubes will make your smoothie chilly, they will also dilute it as they start to melt.

### **Final touch: how to serve it**

Well, yes, I might be of those who pay too much attention to details and enjoy those irrelevant, silly little things, but I love when my meal looks as fantastic as it tastes. If you are one of my kind and want to make your smoothie even more likable and appealing to the beholder's eye, here are some suggestions:

- ☑ Serve your smoothie in a clear glass mug, so that its color can be seen.
- ☑ Decorate your glass with a slice of lemon, orange, pineapple or put some berries at the top of your smoothie.



- ☑ Use paper straws. I like it when the color of straws contrasts the color of smoothie, so I usually use blue or green straws for this one.

Now you may start with your preparations! Once you get the smoothie ready, you will only have one more thing left to do: enjoy!

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