

Fried Beets with Minty Thyme Aioli

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[Prep: 10mins / Cook: 55mins / TOTAL: 1hr5mins]

[8 appetizer size servings]

- 2-3 large beets, red or yellow, washed, peeled, and cut into ½ thick pieces
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- few grinds fresh pepper
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 1/2 cups vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups seltzer

Minty Thyme Aioli

[Total: 5mins]

[1 cup]

- 1 egg yolk
- juice from 1 lemon, about 2 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 2 sprigs dried thyme (can use fresh)
- 8 leave dried mint (can use fresh)

- few grinds fresh pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Start out by rinsing and peeling the beets. Your hands may turn a little (or a lot) pink, but it's worth it. Chop the beets into large slices about 1/2 inch thick. Place them in a large skillet, toss with the balsamic vinegar, olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and a few grinds of fresh pepper. Add 1/2 cup water, cover and bring to a boil over med-high heat. Let boil for about 5 minutes, then lower heat to a simmer and cook until all the liquid has evaporated, about 35 minutes, stirring occasionally.

While the beets are cooking you can make the minty thyme aioli. I usually do this in a small food processor, but you can also do it by hand...it just takes a little more patience and time. Roughly chop up the mint and remove the thyme leaves from their stems, mix together in the food processor with the lemon juice, red wine vinegar, egg yolk, salt and pepper. Slowly incorporate the oil a little at a time. The mixture should slowly emulsify. Refrigerate.

Once the beets are done cooking [you can test them with a fork, they should pierce easily and slide off] remove them from the skillet, and let cool for about 5 minutes [until they are cool enough to handle].

While the beets are cooling off, rinse out the large skillet you were just using, making sure to wipe it dry, add 1 1/2 cups vegetable oil and put over med-high heat. Combine the flour and seltzer, salt, pepper and cayenne. The consistency should be like sour cream, if it's too thick add a little more flour, if it's too thin, a little more seltzer. The thicker the better though - it coats the beets better. Prepare a plate covered in paper towels or newspaper. Add a few beets to the mixture making sure they are all evenly coated. When the oil is ready, you can [carefully] flick a little water and see if it sizzles - if it does it's ready, transfer beets to the oil in a slotted spoon. Repeat until skillet is full with beets, wait 1 minute and then start to flip them. Beets are finished when the batter has turned golden brown. Transfer to platter and let paper soak up some of the oil. Repeat until all beets are finished. Serve on a fresh platter with aioli. Enjoy!