



On 17 June the United Nations celebrates [World Day to Combat Desertification](#) . This day reminds everyone of the importance of healthy and productive lands for a secure, stable and sustainable future. This year's theme is: Our Land. Our Home. Our Future.

Desertification is land degradation in dry-lands, resulting from various factors, including both climatic variations and human activities. It reduces the productivity of land and contributes to poverty. Why? Because prime natural resources - fertile topsoil, vegetation cover, and healthy crops - are the first to disappear in the face of desertification.



In honour of this day, we have picked out three common foods that grow underground, and rely on healthy soil and lands for their taste, size, and texture. We have also included a delicious salad recipe, in case you'd like to test out your culinary skills!

**Beetroots:** Beetroots and beetroot juice have been associated with numerous health benefits, including improved blood flow, lower blood pressure and increased exercise performance. Beetroots can be eaten raw, but are more frequently cooked or pickled. Their leaves are also edible and can be cooked and eaten much like spinach.

**Potatoes:** The potato is the third most important food crop in the world after rice and wheat in terms of human consumption. More than a billion people worldwide eat potato.

**Peanuts:** Peanuts are the only fruit (yes - they are a fruit) that grows underground. It's the quintessential snack food to be enjoyed with an ice-cold lemonade on a warm summer's day. But peanuts can also be used to make oil or even flour.

## **Potato and Beetroot Salad Recipe**

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 - 2 lb potatoes washed and cut into large bite-sized chunks
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 medium beets
- 1 large shallot

- 1/2 cup green peas (boiled)
  
- 1/2 cup sweetcorn
  
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise (or more if you prefer)
  
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
  
- 1 teaspoon mustard
  
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill
  
- Salt and pepper to taste
  
- Roasted peanuts to garnish (optional)

Method:

1. Boil potatoes in salted water and cook until just tender. Drain. Toss potatoes in 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Set aside.
2. In a separate saucepan cook the beets until tender. Drain and let them cool slightly. Peel and cut into 1/2-inch cubes. Toss in 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Set aside.
3. Mix potatoes, beets, shallot, green peas and sweetcorn in a large bowl.
4. In a small bowl or measuring cup, whisk together the mayonnaise, vinegar, mustard, and dill. Toss with the vegetables. Add salt/pepper to taste. Garnish with roasted peanuts for an

added crunch!



Find out more [here](#) . Join the discussion by using the hashtag #2017WDCD