

BETTER KNOW YOUR VEGETABLES:

This Week . . . Green Beans

Green beans are legumes eaten whole rather than left on the vine to ripen into beans that are harvested from their pods. Nowadays most varieties lack the fibrous thread or “string” that can run across the top of the bean. Look for vibrant, tender pods that are just starting to bulge and that sound a decisive snap when broken in half. Store them in plastic bags for up to five days.

Best boiled or braised, take care not to overcook beans. They taste best when they retain their vibrant color and quite a bit of crunch. You can precook beans by cooking them in salted water and plunging them into a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking. Drain the beans well and hold them in the refrigerator; dress them as per your recipe’s instructions the next day.

Green Beans with Salsa Verde with Walnuts and Tarragon

From *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison

Makes 4-6 servings

1 ½ pounds beans, tipped and tailed
½ cup walnuts, finely chopped
2 small garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 cup finely chopped parsley, about 1 large bunch
2 tablespoons finely chopped tarragon
2 tablespoons chopped rinsed capers
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon good-quality red wine vinegar or to taste
Salt and freshly milled pepper

Cut large beans into pieces 2 to 3 inches long. Drop them by handfuls into a large pot of boiling salted water and cook at a full boil, uncovered, until they’re slightly resilient to the touch. Start tasting them after 3 or 4 minutes, although they may well take longer to cook. When they’re done, drain them, shake dry, and spread on a towel. Combine the nuts, garlic, parsley, tarragon, and capers in a small bowl. Stir in the oil and vinegar, then season with salt and pepper to taste. Toss beans in salsa verde and serve warm.

Green Beans with Crisp Shallots, Chile, and Mint

From *Gourmet*, September 2003

Makes 4 servings

1 ½ lb green beans, trimmed
2/3 cup vegetable oil
6 oz shallots (5 medium), thinly sliced crosswise and separated into rings
1 small fresh Thai or serrano chile (2 ¼ inches long; preferably red), thinly sliced crosswise
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup chopped fresh mint

Cook beans in a 4- to 5-quart pot of boiling salted water, uncovered, until just tender, about 5 minutes. Drain beans in a colander.

Heat oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderate heat until hot but not smoking, then fry shallots in 3 batches, stirring frequently, until golden brown, 3 to 5 minutes per batch (watch carefully; shallots burn easily). Transfer shallots quickly as browned with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain. (Shallots will become crisp as they cool.)

Discard all but about 1 tablespoon oil from skillet, then cook chile over moderate heat, stirring, until softened, about 2 minutes. Add beans and salt and toss with tongs until heated through.

Remove from heat and add fried shallots and mint, tossing to combine.



DON'T FORGET

The next meat and cheese delivery is scheduled for October 18th. Place your orders at www.csapasturedmeatandpoultry.com asap!