

Beans

Beans descend from a climbing plant native to Central America. Breeding of modern bean varieties started about 200 years ago. Yellow wax beans and purple beans have resulted from selection over many years.



TIPS:

Short-term Storage: Beans should be stored dry in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for use over one to two weeks' time.

Long-term Storage: For long-term storage, we suggest blanching beans and then freezing them. Pickling beans is also a tasty option. See recipe below.

General Cooking Info: Beans can be eaten raw or lightly stir-fried or blanched when young and tender. They are a great snack this way. If you get more mature beans, their pods will be tougher, and will require longer cooking. Try using them in roasts, stews, or soups at this point. The string of string beans has been bred out of most bean varieties, so you'll find you can use them without stringing.

Growing info: Beans are usually sown directly in the fields around mid-May. They like the weather to be nice and warm. Harvesting beans is a very time consuming task. We grow bush beans on the farm which are about knee high. The fastest way to pick them is to straddle the row, bend over, and pick and pick. It takes about 30 minutes for us to pick about 12 pounds. It is a time consuming and back-breaking job! When the weather is hot, they grow so fast, we have to pick every day. Sometimes we can't and they start to get over mature and can become stringy and meaty. We usually do 3 to 4 sowings of beans in a season to allow for a continuous harvest through the summer.

Common problems: Our biggest problem is finding the time and energy to pick the crop in the height of summer when so much is going on. Our deer fence protects our beans from deer so, so far, so good. We get rabbits, groundhogs, and voles who nibble on the beans close to the ground, but they usually leave plenty for us to eat. using them in roasts, stews, or soups at this point. The string of string beans has been bred out of most bean varieties, so you'll find you can use them without stringing.

String Beans Recipe

1 pound French string beans, both ends removed
 pinch of salt
 1 red onion, large- diced
 1/2 red bell pepper, large diced
 1/2 yellow bell pepper, large diced
 olive oil
 Freshly ground black pepper

-Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.

-Blanch the string beans in a large pot of boiling salted water for just 4 minutes. Drain immediately and immerse in a large bowl of ice water to stop the cooking. When they are cool, drain and set aside.

-Meanwhile, in a large bowl toss the onion and bell peppers together with 2 tablespoons of olive oil and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Place in a single layer on a baking sheet and roast for about 15 minutes, tossing with a spatula from time to time to be sure the vegetables roast evenly.

-Just before serving, reheat the string beans in a large saute pan drizzled with a little olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and arrange on a platter. Spoon the roasted vegetables over the string beans and serve hot or at room temperature.

Adapted from Barefoot Contessa

Sautéed Green Beans

Fresh Green Beans (whole or already trimmed)

1-2 Tablespoons Olive Oil or Butter

1/4 teaspoon Garlic Salt or Salt

1/4 cup Almonds, sliced or slivered (optional, or try any of the toppings listed below)

-Wash the green beans and trim the ends (if not already trimmed)

-Add butter to large skillet or wok and heat on high.

-Add green beans and saute until tender-crisp. Add almonds (if desired) to skillet and heat until toasted.

-Sprinkle the beans with salt or garlic salt and serve.

From Healthy Recipes for Kids

Chilled Green Bean Vinaigrette

3 lbs fresh green beans

1/4-1/3 cup onion, finely chopped (or to taste)

salt and pepper

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard (or to taste)

3 tablespoons white wine vinegar

1/2 cup olive oil

1 teaspoon lemon juice (or to taste)

-Steam beans until JUST crisp-tender (do not over cook, the texture should be firm not soft).

-Rinse/plunge in ice water or very cold water; drain very well.

-In a bowl combine oil, mustard, wine vinegar, lemon juice, salt and pepper (adjusting all ingredients to taste).

-In a large bowl place the beans and chopped onions.

-Pour the vinaigrette over, and toss well to combine.

-Adjust salt and pepper to taste.

-Cover and chill for a minimum of 5 hours.

From Food.com

Pickled Green Beans

2 lbs. green beans
 3 c. water
 1 c. white vinegar
 2 tbsp. pickling salt
 2 tbsp. dried dill weed
 1/4 tsp. cayenne
 2 cloves garlic, minced

Wash beans, drain. Trim ends. Cut beans to fit pint jars. Cook beans in a large amount of boiling water, uncovered, for 3 minutes. Drain. Set aside.

In 4 to 6 quart kettle or Dutch oven, mix 3 cups water, vinegar, salt, dill weed, cayenne and garlic; bring to boiling. Pack beans lengthwise into hot, clean pint jars; leave 1/2 inch headspace. Pour hot pickling liquid over beans; leave 1/2 inch headspace. Adjust lids. Process in boiling water bath 10 minutes. (Start timing when water returns to boil.) Makes 4.

From Cooks.com