

Fava Beans

Fava beans originate in the Mediterranean region. They are said to be amongst the best sources of protein in the bean world.



TIPS:

Short Term Storage: Keep pods dry in the refrigerator.

Long-term Storage: Long-term storage is not recommended. It would be possible to cook them, and then freeze them though.

General Cooking Info: As you can see, fava beans are in a pod. The beans themselves have a skin that is edible, but can be taken off to eat. This makes them a labor intensive food to eat, but the reward is delicious! First shell the beans. Place them in salty water, and bring to a boil. If they are fresh and young, it will take only a few minutes to cook. When beans are tender, drain and let cool until you can handle them. At this point the best thing to do is place them in a bowl and allow whoever is sharing in them to peel the outer skin and pop them in their mouths. Makes for a great snack or a beer companion.

Growing Info: We plant favas as early in the spring as we can. When heat sets in the plants suffer. They show stress in little black pustules on the pods. The part you eat is rarely affected by this, but if you store it for a long time, the black spots will accelerate rot travelling from the pod into the meat of the bean. Best to eat these soon after picking. Fava beans also have very tasty leaves. You may find these in your salad mixes at some point.

Common Problems: Our biggest problem so far with these, is that the heat of an early summer can stress the plants a good deal making it tough to keep them happy by late June and July, when we harvest them. This year, we may try topping the plants so as to stop vegetative growth and stimulate flower and fruit formation earlier. This will allow an earlier harvest before the heat sets in.

Grilled Fava Beans

1 pound of fresh fava beans, still in their pods
 a couple glugs of olive oil
 a few pinches of salt
 optional: crushed red pepper flakes, lemon zest, and or chopped fresh herbs.

In a large bowl toss the fava bean pods with olive oil and salt. Arrange them in a single layer on a grill over medium-high heat. If you're using a grill pan, you may need to cook them in batches. If I'm using an outdoor grill I don't bother covering the favas, but when I use a grill pan, I typically cover the pan with a flat baking sheet to keep more of the heat in the pan and circulating. Grill until blistered on one side - 4 to 5 minutes, then flip and grill for a few minutes more on the other side. If you aren't sure when to pull them off, take a pod off the grill, open and taste one of the beans. You want the fava beans to be smooth and creamy when you pop them out of their skins - not undercooked. But keep in mind that they'll keep steaming in their pods for a few minutes after they come off the grill, unless you eat them as soon as you can handle the pods without singeing your fingers - which is what I encourage you to do :) Season the grilled favas with a bit more salt (if needed) and any herbs or lemon zest if you like. To eat: tear open the puffy green pods, take a fava bean, pinch the skin and slide the bright green fava

from its slipper. Eat them one at a time and be sure to lick your fingers.

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Fava Bean Breakfast Spread

1 (15 ounce) can fava beans
 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
 1 large onion, chopped
 1 large tomato, diced
 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
 salt and pepper to taste
 ground red pepper, to taste

1. Pour the beans into a pot and bring to a boil. Mix them well and add onion, tomato, olive oil, cumin, parsley, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and red pepper. Bring the mixture back to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium. Let the mixture cook 5 minutes. Serve warm with grilled pita.

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Marinated Fava Beans

This easy recipe for Marinated Fava Beans makes the most of the small amount of beans you can glean from the pods. Add these favas to a salad or an antipasto platter.

- 2 lbs. fava beans
- 1 Tbsp. minced shallot
- 1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. salt

- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. minced chives

1. Shell, blanch, and re-shell fava beans. You should have about 1 cup fava beans.

2. In a medium bowl combine shallot, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Let sit 10 minutes. Slowly whisk in oil. Toss with fava beans, cover, and chill for at least 1 hour and up to overnight.

3. To serve, stir in chives and use a slotted spoon to transfer beans to a small serving plate, an antipasto platter, or on top of a simple green salad.

Makes about 1 cup Marinated Fava Beans.

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