

Spicy Green Beans with Lemon and Garlic

Serves 8–10

If you're going to skip a salad, at least you have these green beans. They're long-ish cooked till tender, but never lose their vibrant punchiness thanks to a not-insignificant amount of lemon* and garlic (sliced and cooked with the beans then finely chopped added raw at the end). Green beans (especially the larger, more "adult" ones) have a rather thick exterior, and since we aren't flash-frying or roasting at a high temperature, they really benefit from more time on the stovetop to make sure everything they're cooking with has a chance to make a difference. These are, to me, the ultimate make-ahead side since they only get better with age, just like all of us.

*If you detest bitterness or bitter flavors, then you may consider skipping the whole lemon (simply use the juice and zest). I find the bitterness pleasing as it provides a perky, interesting, delicious, adult flavor I can't seem to get enough of, but to thine own self be true!

Ingredients

8 cloves garlic

1 lemon, seeds removed, thinly sliced,
plus 1 lemon, halved (for juicing)

¼ cup olive oil

1 medium shallot, thinly sliced lengthwise

Kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper

1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes,
plus more

2 pounds green beans or haricots verts,
stems removed (I leave the tails)

¼ cup parsley, coarsely chopped

Instructions

- 1 Finely chop 2 cloves of garlic, and add to a small bowl. Finely chop half the lemon and add to the chopped garlic; set aside. Thinly slice remaining garlic and lemon.
- 2 Heat the olive oil in a large pot or skillet over medium heat and add the shallot and sliced garlic. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until the shallots and garlic are totally tender and nicely browned, 10–12 minutes. Add the remaining sliced lemon and the crushed red pepper flakes, and continue to cook until the lemon has also gotten some color and starts to fall apart a little, 3–5 minutes.
- 3 Add the green beans, and season with salt and pepper, using tongs or a wooden spoon to toss the beans in the gorgeous lemony garlicky chili oil.
- 4 Add about 1 cup of water (this helps the green beans steam and cook down quicker), tossing the beans every now and then, encouraging them to kind of wilt and become tender. Continue cooking and adding more salt and pepper, until the beans go from bright neon green to a deep, truly olive green and are mostly totally softened (a little bite is okay by me), 8–10 minutes. (If your green beans are especially mature, large, or old, they might take longer, so taste as you go, and cook until they're the tenderness you desire.)
- 5 Remove the skillet from the heat, and add the raw garlic-lemon mixture, tossing to coat. Try to let the green beans sit at least 30 minutes at room temperature before serving, if you can. Finish with parsley and a squeeze of lemon if desired.

DO AHEAD: Green beans are terrific made a day ahead, but benefit even from 30 minutes in advance.

LEFTOVERS: You won't have any, but best eaten cold out of the container. Do not reheat.