

Green beans

Commonly referred to as string beans, the string that once was their trademark can seldom be found in modern varieties. Although these bright green and crunchy beans are available at your local market throughout the year, they are in season from summer through early fall when they are at their best and the least expensive.

Green beans are picked while still immature and the inner bean is just beginning to form. They are one of only a few varieties of beans that are eaten fresh. Although green beans vary in size they average about four inches in length. They are usually deep emerald green in color and come to a slight point at either end. They contain tiny seeds within their thin pods.

Green beans are now in the peak of their season when they have the best flavor and are the least expensive. You will also benefit from their rich concentration of folate, fiber, and vitamin K.

5-Minute Green Beans (Serves 2)

Green beans are a rich source of vitamin K, C, and A, as well as health-promoting carotenoid phytonutrients such as beta-carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin. And one cup contains only 44 calories—great reasons to enjoy this easy-to-prepare recipe.

Prep and Cook Time: 8 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 lb green beans
- 2 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 medium cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 TBS extra virgin olive oil
- sea salt and pepper to taste
- Optional:
- 3 TBS goat cheese
- 2 TBS sliced almonds
- 4-5 drops tamari soy sauce
- 1 TBS sliced sun dried tomatoes
- 2 TBS roasted red bell peppers
- 1 TBS chopped basil

Directions:

1. Chop garlic and let sit for at least 5 minutes to bring out its health promoting properties.
2. Fill the bottom of a steamer pot with 2 inches of water.
3. While steam is building up in steamer, cut ends off green beans.
4. Steam for 5 minutes. A fork should pierce through them easily when they are done.
5. Transfer to a bowl. For more flavor, toss green beans with the remaining ingredients while they are still hot.

Healthy Cooking Tips: To mellow the flavor of the garlic, add garlic to green beans for the last 2 minutes of steaming.