



By Peggy Crum, MA, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

The truth about families is they all have their oddities, a member who just doesn't fit the mold. This certainly rings true for the legume family. When you think of legumes, most likely dried beans, lentils, and peas come to mind. Then there's the green bean—a standout for sure. Is it really a legume? Most legumes are inedible pods; the goodness is the mature seed that's inside the pod. With green beans, the edible part is the whole thing (minus the stem).

Green beans are picked when they're young and tender. So tender, in fact that they're often called snap beans. Sometimes they're referred to as string beans, a holdover from a time when green beans had a fibrous strand running the length of one side of the pod—you had to "string" them to make them pleasant to eat. Modern varieties are stringless.

Green beans are quick to prepare:

- Eat them raw: Wash, serve whole for dipping or cut small for salad.
- Heat and eat: Wash, blanch or lightly cook in plenty of boiling salted water—no lid please. When bright green, drain them and let cool. If serving cold, drain and plunge them in icy cold water. Hot or cold, wait to dress them until almost ready to serve—adding the acid ingredient (lemon and other fruit juice, vinegar, wine) too far ahead will turn your pretty green beans gray.
- Sauté: Warm oil in skillet, add your washed and stemmed green beans, stir them around in the warm oil, put the lid on and leave them alone. Steam in the closed pot cooks the green beans quickly without overbrowning. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add a dash of lemon juice or vinegar if you like—just enough to brighten the flavor.

How you prepare green beans has a lot to do with your family tradition. Rather than a quick dip in boiling water, stewing—with or without meat for flavoring, with or without potatoes—results in fall apart tender beans with the taste of home.

# RECIPE for health

AUGUST 2019

featured food:

## GREEN BEANS

### Sautéed Green Beans with Nouc Cham

By Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski, Residential Dining Services  
Serves 6

- 2 pounds green beans
- 2 T. salt
- 2 Thai chili peppers (may substitute serrano pepper)
- ¼ c. lime juice
- ¼ c. fish sauce
- ¼ c. sugar
- ½ c. warm water
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 T. minced ginger
- 2 T. canola oil or grapeseed oil
- ½ c. julienne cut red onion
- ½ c. sliced shitake mushrooms
- ½ c. halved grape tomatoes
- 2 T. chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 T. chopped fresh basil
- ¼ lime

Bring 2 quarts of water to boil in large stock pot. Wash and remove stem end of green beans. Add green beans and salt to boiling water; blanch green beans for 2 ½ minutes. Meanwhile prepare large bowl of ice water. Remove green beans from boiling water and shock in ice water. Blanching partially cooks the vegetable and shocking stops the cooking process to keep bright color and crispy texture. Drain green beans and pat dry.

Prepare Thai chili peppers by slicing one to make thin rings; seeding and deveining the other and then brunoised (finely diced). Mix lime juice, fish sauce, sugar, water, garlic, ginger, and peppers to make sauce for green beans; set aside.

Heat oil in pan; sauté onions, mushrooms, and tomatoes over medium high heat for 2 minutes. Add green beans and sauté 2 minutes more.

Remove pan from heat. Add ¾ of sauce, taste, add a little more if needed. Squeeze lime over fresh herbs; garnish the dish. Serve extra sauce on the side.

- Join us in person at Brody Square Demo Kitchen.  
Sign-up at [health4u@msu.edu](mailto:health4u@msu.edu).