

Fresh-picked green beans are summer's jewels

See related story on Taste front.

FRESH GREEN BEAN SALAD

2 pounds green beans, trimmed

1 large red onion, peeled, halved and thinly sliced

1 cup toasted pine nuts

Salt and pepper to taste

1 large head radicchio

1 large head Bibb lettuce

Cook beans in 2 quarts boiling salted water until crisp-tender, about 7 minutes. Drain. Rinse under cold water and drain well. Pat dry. Toss with Mustard Vinaigrette (recipe follows).

MUSTARD VINAIGRETTE

3 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 Tablespoon coarse-grained mustard

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1 teaspoon salt

9 Tablespoons olive oil

To make vinaigrette: Combine vinegar, mustard, and salt in medium bowl. Slowly whisk in oil in this stream.

Combine beans, onion and 1/2 cup pine nuts in a large bowl. Mix in vinaigrette. Season with salt and pepper. Let marinate 15 to 30 minutes.

Alternate radicchio and Bibb lettuce leaves over a large platter. Mound bean mixture in center. Sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup pine nuts and serve.

SUMMER HERBED BEANS

1/2 pound yellow wax beans, cut into 1-inch pieces

1/4 pound green beans, cut into 1-inch pieces

2 Tablespoons snipped fresh basil

1 Tablespoon snipped fresh dill

1 Tablespoon melted butter or margarine

Salt and pepper to taste

1 Tablespoon olive oil

1 large tomato, cut into wedges

1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese

Precook wax and green beans, covered, in a small amount of boiling salted water for 4 minutes. Drain well.

Meanwhile, make sauce: In a small bowl, combine basil, dill, melted butter, pepper and salt. Set aside.

Pour the olive oil into a wok or a large skillet. (Add more oil as necessary during cooking.) Preheat over medium-high heat. Add the partially cooked beans to the wok or

1/4 cup chicken stock

3 scallions, chopped

Chopped walnuts for garnish

Blanch green beans in a pot of lightly salted boiling water over high heat for 3 minutes. Drain, rinse with cold water and drain again. Pat dry.

Place wok or large skillet over high heat for 1/4 minute, then swirl in the oil. After another 1/4 minute add the minced ginger and stir-fry over moderately high heat for 1 minute. Add the green beans and stir-fry for 2 minutes.

Add the soy sauce and chicken stock. Bring rapidly to a boil, then cover and simmer over moderate heat until beans are tender, about 4 minutes.

Stir in the scallions and toss briefly over high heat, then transfer to a heated serving platter, garnish with chopped walnuts and serve at once.

ROASTED POTATOES, FENNEL AND GREEN BEANS

2 fennel bulbs

1 1/2 pounds small new red potatoes

1 1/2 pounds thin, tender green beans

1/4 cup olive oil

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Cut the tops off of the fennel, and cut the bulbs into quarters. Thinly slice the potatoes. Snap the ends off of the beans. Combine the fennel, potatoes, and oil in a mixing bowl and toss well. Spread the mixture out on a baking sheet, sprinkle with the coarse salt, and bake for 30 minutes.

Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Toss the beans with the cooked vegetables and bake another 10 to 15 minutes. Sprinkle with the pepper and serve hot or at room temperature.

YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S GOLDENROD BEANS

1 1/2 pounds whole green beans

1 1/2 Tablespoons butter

2 Tablespoons flour

Salt and pepper to taste

1/4 cup evaporated milk

3 hard-cooked eggs, separated

1/4 cup mayonnaise

Cook beans in boiling salted water until tender. Save 1/4 cup of the liquid. Melt butter, blend in flour, salt and pepper. Add bean stock and cook until thickened, stirring constantly. Add milk and chopped egg whites. Heat thoroughly.

Remove from heat and add mayonnaise. Drain beans, cover with

sauce and sprinkle with egg yolks pressed through a sieve.

(For extra flavor, add 1/4 cup grated cheese and 1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce.)

VEGETABLE STEW, CALIFORNIA STYLE

2 pounds zucchini or yellow squash, unpeeled, and cut crosswise into 1/4-inch thick slices

1 pound green beans, cut into 1 1/2-inch lengths

4 medium-sized tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and coarsely chopped

1 cup fresh corn kernels

2 Tablespoons vegetable oil

1 cup finely chopped onion

1 Tablespoon finely chopped garlic

1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh green chili

2 Tablespoons chili

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

In a heavy 7-quart fireproof casserole, heat the oil over moderate heat until a light haze forms above it. Add the onion and garlic, and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until translucent. Add the squash, green beans, and chili, and stir for 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, salt and pepper.

Reduce the heat to low, partially cover the casserole and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the corn, mix well and continue to simmer, partially covered, until the squash and green beans are tender but still somewhat crisp. Taste for seasoning and serve at once directly from the casserole. Serves 4 to 6.

Excellent ways to enjoy eggplant

See Larry Jones' Taste buds column on Taste front.

EGGPLANT SALAD

4 medium eggplant, halved lengthwise

3 Tablespoons olive oil

1 cup tomatoes, cut into large chunks

1/4 cup fresh chopped basil

1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 clove garlic, minced

Wine from page 1B

The 1980 Dry Creek Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon boasts a fresh blackberry quality with a touch of black olive and tobacco. The 1993 Dry Creek Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon boasts a juicy fruit character with a beautiful balance of oak.

Grilled meats such as pork tenderloin, lamb chops or even fresh salmon would be complemented by this beauty.

The 1987 Dry Creek Vineyard Meritage, a blend of cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc and merlot, is an elegant wine with a complex

melange of fruit and a pleasant note of cigar box.

The 1991 Dry Creek Vineyard Sonoma Cabernet Sauvignon is a yummy wine with attractive spice and blackberry fruit. The 1991 Dry Creek Vineyard Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (currently available) is delicious now and will stand the test of time. It has intense, concentrated fruit and spice with a structure that longs for grilled New York strip.

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BABA GANOOSH

1 large eggplant

4 Tablespoons tahini (sesame seed paste)

1/2 teaspoon garlic, chopped

3 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice

3 Tablespoons cold water

1/2 teaspoon salt

Dash of fresh ground pepper

1 Tablespoon olive oil

Pierce the eggplant in several places with a fork. If cooking indoors, wrap eggplant in foil and bake at 350 degrees F. for 40 minutes. If grilling over coals or gas, cook on all sides until the eggplant collapses and a great deal of steam is released.

Dump the eggplant into a bowl of cold water and peel while still hot. Allow eggplant to drain in a colander until cool. Squeeze pulp to remove any bitter juices. Mash.

Combine eggplant with tahini, garlic and lemon juice in a blender or food processor. Purée and thin with water, if needed. With the machine running, add the salt, pepper and olive oil in a slow drizzle. Spread out dip onto shallow dish and garnish with chopped pears, parsnips and tomatoes. Serve with pita bread. Makes about 1 1/4 cups.

BASIC GRILLED EGGPLANT

1 medium eggplant, cut into 1/4-inch thick slices

1 Tablespoon olive oil

Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Arrange the eggplant on a preheated grill. Brush with oil and lightly season with salt and pepper to taste. Total cooking time, uncovered should not exceed 15 minutes. Serves 2-3.

Chef's secret: Top with some mashed garlic, chopped basil or a little parsley while cooking.

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