

# Cool Beans

This versatile veggie shines in satisfying holiday sides.

BY DIANA ANDREWS

To my mind, there's no more versatile vegetable than the humble green bean. Roasted, blanched, braised, boiled, steamed, slow-cooked, or stir-fried, green beans always add flavor, color, and texture to the plate.

Although their peak growing season is May through September, we have access to green beans and their many varieties year-round because they're grown the world over. That's why it's easy for me to make my favorite green-bean dishes whenever I crave them. These quick, delicious, and easy recipes are especially handy during the holiday season. Lemon and Garlic Green Beans are bright, snappy, and zesty, while Braised Romano Beans with Garlic and Tomatoes offer richer, more comforting flavors. Unexpected ingredients come together in Roasted Long Beans with Orange-Miso Butter, resulting in robust umami satisfaction.

And Quick-Marinated Green Beans and Baby Corn with Shaved Sweet Onion and Bell Pepper is like a friend you feel comfortable inviting to any celebration—lively, colorful, and able to play well with others. Any type of green bean can be used in these recipes (see chart, p. 68), although cooking times will vary. Simply allow more time for thicker bean varieties and less time for thinner ones, such as haricots vert.

These recipes are super approachable and don't require much effort. Serve them at your next dinner or party. You'll be glad you did.

*Diana Andrews is food editor/test kitchen manager at Fine Cooking.*

## lemon and garlic green beans

*This remarkably simple, bright side is quick to prepare. Serves 6 to 8*

- Kosher salt**
- 1½ lb. green beans, preferably a mix of green and yellow wax, trimmed**
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 Tbs. finely grated lemon zest**
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice; more to taste**
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes**
- ½ tsp. granulated garlic**
- Sliced almonds, toasted**

**Flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper**  
**Lemon wedges, for serving**

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil. Blanch the beans, stirring occasionally, until crisp-tender, about 6 minutes. Drain and return to the pot.

Add the oil, lemon zest and juice, 1 tsp. kosher salt, the pepper flakes, and granulated garlic. Toss well, and season to taste with lemon juice and kosher salt. Transfer to a serving platter, and top with almonds, a sprinkle of sea salt, and pepper. Serve with lemon wedges.







## Bean talk

- Originating in Peru and brought to the Americas by migrating Indian tribes, green beans have been harvested for more than 7,000 years.
- Botanist Calvin Keeney selectively bred the string from the bean in the late 19th century, which is why they're more commonly called green beans instead of string beans.
- Green beans are categorized as either bush beans or pole beans. Bush beans don't require trellising or support and don't grow taller than 2 feet high. Pole or runner beans are known as climbing beans; they require staking, hence the name "pole beans."
- There are more than 130 varieties of green beans, differing in flavor, color, and pod size.
- Green beans are a rich source of dietary fiber and contain vitamins B, C, and K; iron; and magnesium.



# A world of beans

GREEN BEAN IS A GENERIC TERM for the skinny, long beans that are almost universally available in grocery stores. But the world of beans is much wider and more colorful than this standby. Here are a few varieties with subtly different textures, hues, and flavors; all can be used interchangeably.



**Haricots vert**  
Literally “green bean” in French, this thinner, slightly longer version of the classic American variety is picked young, resulting in a more flavorful and tender veggie with a mild seed. A favorite of chefs, they are a little more expensive than the standard bean.



**Rattlesnake beans**  
An 8-inch heirloom pole bean, it’s popular for its purple-speckled green appearance, its sweet and mild flavor, and its ivory-hued pods that taste nutty and meaty when mature. When cooked, the beans turn a uniform green.



**Speckled (dragon tongue) beans**  
A beautiful mottled purple-burgundy bean pod filled with pale green beans, these stringless 6-inch-long wide wax beans are from the cranberry bean family. When young, their crisp exterior and nutty seed can be eaten whole. When mature, their bean pods can be shelled.



**Yellow wax beans**  
Soft yellow in appearance, these beans taste similar to their green cousin, with a mild nutty seed, a crisp shell, and a stringless pod. Available year-round, they make an attractive mix-in with the classic green variety.



**Chinese long beans**  
Known by many names (asparagus bean, snake bean, pea bean, and yard-long bean), this variety can grow up to 3 feet long. Young, sweet, tender, and crisp, they are often paired with Southeast Asian ingredients. Choose them if you’re looking for an intense bean flavor.



**Green beans**  
Also known as string or snap beans, this unripe common bean differs from others because it is harvested young and consumed whole, before the seeds have matured. Grown from the earth or on a pole, this is the most commonly consumed variety of bean.



**Romano beans**  
About 6 inches long, wide, and flat, this variety, also known as the Italian flat bean, has a meaty, mild, somewhat grassy-tasting seed. It can also be yellow or purple, and is stringless, making for easy access to its tender seeds. Best when lightly cooked, braised, or stir-fried.



**Purple (violetta) beans**  
Few beans are as striking as this stringless variety, which has a dark purple shell and light green seeds. With the same flavor and texture as the green variety, they are essentially interchangeable. When cooked, the bean turns from purple to green.

Photograph: Rattlesnake beans, www.myrecessionkitchen.com





## braised romano beans with garlic and tomatoes

*Slow-cooked on top of the stove, romano beans are infused with a tomato braising liquid, kicked up with a touch of heat, and enriched with a knob of butter. This comforting side can be made ahead and reheated just before serving. Serves 6 to 8*

- 1 Tbs. olive oil**
- 1 packed cup very thinly sliced sweet onion (about 4½ oz.)**
- ¼ cup garlic, very thinly sliced lengthwise (about 1 oz.)**
- 1 lb. romano or green beans, trimmed**
- ¾ cup dry white wine**
- 2 14.5-oz. cans stewed tomatoes**
- 1½ tsp. minced jarred hot cherry peppers; more to taste**
- Kosher salt**
- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) cold, unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces**

In a medium Dutch oven or other heavy-duty pot, heat the oil over medium heat until shimmering. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and translucent, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the beans and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion and garlic just begin to brown and the beans turn bright green, about 3 minutes. Add the wine, raise the heat to high, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the pot is almost dry and the wine is mostly evaporated, 7 to 8 minutes. Add the tomatoes, peppers, and 1 tsp. salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer, breaking up larger tomato pieces with a wooden spoon.

Reduce the heat to very low, cover with the lid slightly ajar, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the beans are tender, 60 to 75 minutes. Remove from the heat, and stir in the butter one piece at a time until it melts. Season to taste with salt, transfer to a large bowl, and serve.





## roasted long beans with orange-miso butter

*Orange juice, miso, and butter infuse long beans with a sweet and nutty flavor. Serves 6 to 8*

- 1½ lb. long or green beans, trimmed**
- 1½ Tbs. peanut oil**
- Kosher salt**
- 2 Tbs. fresh orange juice**
- 2 Tbs. white miso**
- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter**
- 1 Tbs. plain rice vinegar**
- 1 tsp. soy sauce; more to taste**
- 1 tsp. dark brown sugar**
- Toasted sesame seeds**
- Finely grated orange zest**

Position a rack in the center of the oven, and heat the oven to 425°F.

Put the long beans on a large rimmed baking sheet. Toss with the oil and ½ tsp. salt until well coated. Spread the beans evenly on the baking sheet (it's OK if the beans overlap a bit). Transfer to the oven, and roast until just beginning to soften, about 15 minutes. Toss and continue to roast until the beans are crisp-tender, 6 to 8 minutes more.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan over medium-low heat, whisk the orange juice, miso, butter, vinegar, soy

sauce, and brown sugar until smooth and heated through, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat to cool slightly, about 1 minute.

Put the beans in a large bowl, and toss with the miso mixture until the beans are well coated. Tent with foil for 10 minutes, tossing occasionally. Transfer the beans to a serving platter, top with sesame seeds and zest, and serve.

**Note:** If using common green beans, reduce the cooking time slightly.



## quick-marinated green beans and baby corn with shaved sweet onion and bell pepper

*Marinating green beans for just a short time at room temperature fills them with loads of great flavor. If you can't find sambal oelek, use Sriracha instead. Serves 6 to 8*

- Kosher salt**
- 1 lb. green beans, trimmed**
- 3 Tbs. tamari**
- 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice**
- 1½ packed Tbs. light brown sugar**
- 1 Tbs. peanut oil**
- 1 tsp. fish sauce**
- 1 tsp. sambal oelek**
- ½ tsp. tamarind concentrate or paste**
- 1 15.5-oz. can whole baby corn, rinsed and drained**
- ½ cup very thinly sliced red bell pepper, preferably sliced on a mandoline (about 2 oz.)**
- ¼ cup very thinly sliced sweet onion, preferably sliced on a mandoline (about 1 oz.)**
- 2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh cilantro**
- ½ cup salted dry-roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped (about 1¾ oz.)**

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil. Blanch the beans, stirring occasionally, until crisp-tender and bright green, about 6 minutes. Drain, rinse under cold water until cool, and transfer to a large bowl.

In a small bowl, whisk the tamari, lemon juice, brown sugar, oil, fish sauce, sambal oelek, tamarind, and a pinch of salt. Transfer the marinade to the beans, and toss well. Let sit at room temperature, tossing occasionally, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, cut the corn in half lengthwise. Add the corn, pepper, and onion to the bowl with the beans, and toss until well combined. Let sit at room temperature another 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt. Transfer the mixture to a large serving platter, top with the cilantro and peanuts, and serve.

