



Green beans are enjoying a renaissance in our house. I'm using them more often as a side and as an ingredient in stir fry and soup. I typically blanch the beans before using them in recipes or serving on a party platter. As always, bacon can be substituted for pancetta.

Green Beans & Pancetta

Today is green bean day! I often hesitate to post vegetable side recipes. I figure “people know how to do that,” and then, without fail, I see a celebrity chef on TV make something very similar to the recipe I was thinking about posting. My green bean recipe falls into this category. You probably already make this, but if not, give it a try because it’s really good!

Ingredients

1 pound of fresh green beans, trimmed (use frozen, thawed, if out-of-season)

¼ pound of pancetta (ask deli person or butcher to cut it in one thick slice)

½ of a large shallot

1 Tablespoon of Kosher salt

Fresh black pepper

1 pinch of crushed red peppers

1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

2 Tablespoons of butter

Use fresh green beans if available. Trim the ends and check for (and remove) strings. Now, we’re going to blanch and shock the beans. Bring a large pot of water to a low boil, and add the kosher salt. Give the salt a minute to melt. Add the green beans and turn the burner down to simmer, so that the water bubbles gently. Stir the beans occasionally. After 2 minutes, scoop out the green beans and put them immediately into a big bowl filled with ice water. Swish the beans so that they cool quickly. When perfectly cool, drain the beans and set aside if you are cooking dinner now, or put them in the fridge until you are ready to use them later.

Cut the pancetta into small chunks. Give the shallot a very small dice (not quite minced, or it will just disappear).

Put the pancetta into a medium sauté pan (one that will also hold the green beans), and heat over medium heat for about 5 minutes or until the pancetta is cooked through. You can add 1 Tablespoon of EVOO to help move the process along. Cook the pancetta chunks as you would cook bacon. Some people like it really crispy, while some like it chewy. I'm in the chewy camp.

When you're satisfied with the pancetta, add the crushed red pepper, shallot, 1 Tablespoon of butter, and beans. Toss the beans in the oil / butter, and keep the heat at medium. Really, all you want to do is warm the beans. Please notice I did not add salt, because the pancetta is plenty salty. When the beans are warm (still crisp), add the remaining 1 Tablespoon of butter to make them glisten. Serve immediately, or hold over very low heat for a few minutes. Eat soon so that you get that delicious snap from the green beans. Enjoy!

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