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Green Beans Gremolata

Serves 4 to 6

Jeffrey loves French string beans so I'm always looking for new ways to prepare them. I blanch these and make the gremolata in advance and store them separately in the refrigerator. Then, just before dinner, I'll reheat the beans and toss on the topping with all the garlic, lemon zest, Parmesan, and pine nuts.

1 pound French green beans, trimmed
2 teaspoons minced garlic (2 cloves)
1 tablespoon grated lemon zest (2 lemons)
3 tablespoons minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts (*see note)
2-1/2 tablespoons good olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the green beans and blanch them to 2 to 3 minutes, until tender but still crisp. Drain the beans in a colander and immediately put them into a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking and preserve their bright green color.

For the gremolata, toss the garlic, lemon zest, parsley, Parmesan, and pine nuts in a small bowl and set aside.

When ready to serve, heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Drain the beans and pat them dry. Add the beans to the pan and sauté, turning frequently, for 2 minutes, until coated with olive oil and heated through. Off the heat, add the gremolata and toss well. Sprinkle with 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper and serve hot.

*Note: Toast pine nuts in a dry sauté pan over low heat for 5 to 10 minutes.