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Lemon Haricots Verts with Crispy Shallots

Serves 2

Otherwise known as long, slender, green beans (in French, "haricot" means bean, and "vert" means green), haricots verts immediately elevate this meal for two. So much so, in fact, that you may momentarily catch yourself thinking, "Am I dining at a fancy, palatial French estate?" You're probably not, but, this simple dish adds plenty of panache to any menu. Bright lemony flavors and crispy shallots add just the right amount of complexity to these delicious green beans.

Ingredients:

2 shallots, sliced crosswise into rings
6-8 tablespoons canola oil, divided (for cooking shallots)
12 oz haricot verts, trimmed
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup chicken broth
1 lemon, zested and juiced
Kosher salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Heat 3 tablespoons of canola oil in a small saucepan over medium heat. Separate the sliced shallots into individual rings. Add to the hot oil and cook, stirring occasionally until they gradually turn golden and become slightly caramelized. Remove them from the pan with a slotted spoon.
2. Increase the heat to high, and add the remaining canola oil to the pan (until about 1/2" deep, or until shallots could be submerged). Let the oil heat until sizzling hot, about 350°F. Add the caramelized shallots back into the pan and deep-fry for about 4-5 seconds, watching closely to ensure that the shallots don't burn -- it all happens quickly!
3. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the now crispy shallots to a paper towel-lined plate to absorb any excess oil.
4. Meanwhile, blanch the green beans. In a large pot of boiling water, boil the haricots verts for 2-3 minutes, remove with a slotted spoon plunging them immediately into a bowl of ice water to halt the cooking process.
5. In a large skillet, melt the butter. Add the chicken broth and lemon juice, and bring to a simmer. Simmer until the liquid reduces by half. Then add the blanched beans, and sauté until the beans are crisp tender. Season with Kosher salt and pepper.
6. Transfer the cooked beans to a serving dish and top with lemon zest and the crispy shallots. Enjoy immediately.