

Pasta with broad beans, asparagus and mint

Recipes by Hester Guy, Photographed by Pippa Marffy

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I have just been bought a colander full of freshly picked, baby broad beans by my cousin. Podded, and quickly cooked in boiling salted water, drained, and dressed with a good slug of extra virgin olive oil, and a squeeze of lemon juice.....these will be such a taste sensation!

Below is a quick, practical recipe for using broad beans and a selection of spring vegetables which can be varied to suit.

Ingredients:

- 250g tagliatelle (or other fresh or dried pasta)
- 1 cup freshly podded broad bean
- 1 or 2 bunches asparagus, peeled, trimmed (Cut spears in half if very long)
- Green beans, trimmed, or baby green peas are an optional extra
- 1 bunch radishes, trimmed finely sliced
- A generous slug of extra virgin olive oil
- New Zealand sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

To finish:

- A handful sliced almonds, lightly toasted
- 25g shaved Parmesan cheese
- A generous handful mint, coarsely chopped

Method:

1. Firstly prepare the selection of green vegetables
 2. Put on water to boil for the pasta and add sufficient salt, so the water tastes like sea water!
 3. Cook pasta until just tender.
 4. Drain and toss in olive oil, season well
 5. Meanwhile quickly blanch the vegetable selection. Drain and add to cooked pasta. Toss well
 6. Turn out into a hot dish and garnish with almonds, lots of fresh mint, shaved Parmesan and another drizzle of olive oil
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Hester's broad bean hints:

- When broad beans are really young they can be cooked, pod, bean and all, quickly in boiling salted water.
- Always pick your broad beans when the pods are just full, before the beans become coarse and tough. However, if the broad beans have escaped your attention and are older, then plunge them quickly into boiling water and pop the luminous green bean from their leathery jackets, reheat in a little butter or olive oilthey are really delicious! (I think many of us have childhood recollections of eating those dreadful, tough, overcooked, grey looking broad beans!
- For the photography I used frozen broad beans. While still frozen, pour over boiling water and treat as described above.
- Try making a dip with a mix of podded and shelled broad beans and baby green peas. Purée roughly in a food processor retaining the texture. Add lots of freshly chopped mint, a finely chopped chilli, extra virgin oil, and season to taste. Just before serving add the juice of lemon to heighten the flavour. (if the lemon juice is added too soon the green vegetables lose their colour). Serve with oven baked bread croutes.