Green Bean Salad with Eggs

Salad envy. Sound unlikely? Wait till you see this salad. And it's portable, too! How many times have you offered to take a salad to the picnic, then panicked? What if it sogs up? What if it wilts? Here's our delicious solution to that conundrum. Make the marjoram dressing in a jar, platter up the crisp beans, watercress and soft-cooked eggs, and then drizzle with the dressing when you get to the park. No sog; pure salad. Just gorgeousness.

See Cook's Note on how to toast almonds.

Ingredients

dressing
1 small shallot, minced (about 2 tablespoons)
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
3 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper, as much as you'd like
1 tablespoon fresh marjoram leaves, finely chopped

salad
Kosher salt
2 to 3 large eggs
1½ pounds thin green beans (haricot vert), trimmed
2 loosely packed cups watercress, or substitute baby arugula
1/4 cup sliced almonds with skin, toasted

Directions

for the dressing
Whisk together the shallot, mustard and vinegar in a small bowl. Slowly drizzle in the oil, whisking, to combine. Stir in the salt, pepper and marjoram.

for the salad
Bring a soup pot of very well-salted water to a boil. (The water should taste salty. Don't be put off by it. It really enlivens the beans.) Have an ice bath (a large bowl of ice cubes and water) standing by. Use a ladle to lower the eggs into the boiling water and cook for 6 to 8 minutes. At 6 minutes the yolk will be runny. At 8 minutes the yolk will still be soft but not runny. When the eggs have about 3 minutes left to cook, add the green beans. In 3 minutes, they should turn bright green and be crisp-tender. Remove the eggs and beans and put them all in the ice bath. When the beans are shocked, lay them out on a clean kitchen towel and pat dry. Peel the eggs.

Arrange the green beans and watercress on a serving platter. Halve the eggs and arrange on top of the beans. Scatter the almonds over top. Drizzle with the dressing.

Cook's Notes
Toasting nuts elevates their flavor. Spread them in an even layer on a baking sheet and toast at 350 degrees, stirring halfway through, until they begin to brown and smell toasty, about 10 minutes total. Watch carefully as they can go from perfect to burnt in no time. Alternately, you can toss them in a skillet over medium heat until they toast.

total time: 25 minutes
active prep: 25 minutes
serves: 4
difficulty: *easy*