



Spring's return means it's easy to enjoy our greens again

By Elizabeth Karme

This is one of the prettiest dishes to dress a spring - or dreaming of spring - table. After months of delicious but (let's face it) mostly brown food, my appetite is primed for bright colors and fresh flavors.

And there are few green vegetables as vibrant and appealing as sugar snap peas. My mother served them often in a quick saute with toasted almonds. But in recent years, I have munched on them raw as a healthy, crunchy snack. I had almost forgotten what they tasted like cooked until one day last year when I was browsing through a cookbook by Jessica Seinfeld, "The Can't Cook Book: Recipes for the Absolutely Terrified."

The book is my favorite gift for young cooks, or anyone who thinks cooking is difficult. It contains appealing contemporary recipes and everything is simplified and spelled out. When I saw the picture of her minty sugar snaps, it reminded me of my mother's dish and I had a craving that I couldn't stop thinking about until I made them.

Because I love citrus with both mint and sugar snap peas, I added the zest and the juice of a tangerine to brighten the flavor and balance the richness of the butter. The toasted sliced almonds add a welcome crunch and, if you are like me, you will find yourself making sure that every bite includes an almond or two.

MINTY SUGAR SNAP PEAS WITH TANGERINE AND TOASTED ALMONDS



Ingredients

Start to finish: 20 minutes
Servings: 6
1 pound sugar snap peas
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 cup sliced almonds
2 large shallots, sliced into thin rings
Zest and juice of 1 large tangerine
Ground black pepper
10 to 15 fresh mint leaves, julienned or chopped
Coarse sea salt

Preparation

Using scissors or your fingers, remove the stems from the snap peas and pull to remove the string if necessary (many brands are sold with the strings already removed). Place the snap peas in a bowl or strainer and rinse with cool water. Set aside.

In a heavy saute pan over medium, combine 1 1/2 tablespoons of the butter, the salt and the almonds. Once the butter is melted, lower the heat and stir the almonds occasionally until golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Once the almonds are toasted, transfer to a plate, then return the pan to medium heat and add the remaining butter.

Add the shallots and cook, stirring, for 3 to 4 minutes, or until

they are soft and beginning to brown. Add the snap peas and cook, stirring often, until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Add the tangerine juice and cook for another minute. Stir in the tangerine zest and mint, then season with pepper. Transfer to a serving dish and top with the almonds. Finish the dish with a sprinkle of crunchy sea salt.

Nutrition information per serving

140 calories; 90 calories from fat (64 percent of total calories); 10 g fat (4 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 15 mg cholesterol; 170 mg sodium; 10 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 5 g sugar; 4 g protein.

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