

Green Beans in Tomato Sauce

Green beans in tomato sauce is a simple dish that's flavoured by good quality olive oil, caramelised onion and tomatoes with a pinch of allspice and ground cloves to give it its own unique flavour.



This is a typical country-style Greek dish, and apart from using tinned cherry tomatoes (it's usually made with skinned fresh tomatoes), I've kept it authentic.

The addition of allspice, ground cloves, chopped celery and

one bay leaf is particular to the island of Hydra.

You don't have to include them, but they do give the sauce a deeper flavour. This is what makes it so hard to resist!

I'm not kidding when I say that my family and I have eaten about 2 kgs of green beans over the past 2 weeks.

My main shot shows you exactly how we eat this dish at home when we are having a 'vegetarian dinner'.

Green beans in tomato sauce with baked potatoes, feta cheese and some bread (preferably pita) and you have one mega healthy dinner.

You won't miss the meat!!

Danielle

Preparation Time: 10 mins

Cooking Time: 30 – 40 mins

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 500 g / 1 lb fresh green beans, trimmed (note 1)
 - 2 stalks of celery, finely chopped
 - 1 large onion, chopped
 - 3 cloves of garlic, grated
 - 3 tbsp olive oil
 - 1 x 400 g / 14 oz tinned cherry tomatoes (note 2)
 - 1/2 tsp sugar
 - a good pinch of ground cloves (note 3)
 - a good pinch of allspice
 - 1 bay leaf
 - 1/2 tsp salt, 1/4 tsp pepper
-

Instructions

1. Heat the oil over moderate heat in a medium large pan.
 2. Add the chopped onion and saute until soft and transparent. Sprinkle with sugar and continue to saute for another couple of minutes to caramelize, stirring occasionally.
 3. Add the tomatoes, celery, garlic, bay leaf, clove and allspice.
 4. Press the cherry tomatoes with the back of a spoon to release all their juices.
 5. Cover and simmer for 2 minutes.
 6. Stir the beans into the pan. Coat beans with the olive oil and tomatoes. Bring to the boil.
 7. Turn down the heat to moderate low and simmer for 30 – 40 mins **with the lid on**. The timing depends on how fresh your beans are and how soft you like them to be once cooked. Stir occasionally. Greek style is to eat them very soft. Keep in mind that this dish isn't meant to be overly saucy. At least half of the juices will evaporate during cooking time (note 4).
 8. Once cooked, add salt and pepper.
 9. Serve warm or at room temperature, as a main (with or without meat) or as a side.
-

Notes

1. I keep my beans whole, but you can cut them in half or thirds.
2. Traditionally, only fresh tomatoes would be used. They would need to be skinned; way too much work for me. A tin of cherry tomatoes works really well because the tomatoes are little and easily crushed.
3. I crushed 2 whole cloves with a mortar and pestle. It took all of 10 seconds.

4. If there seems to be too much sauce in the pan, remove lid and continue to simmer until beans are ready.

Adapted from Recipes from a Greek Island written by Susie Jacobs.