

White Bean and Asparagus Salad with Tarragon-Lemon Dressing

By Melissa Clark

YIELD 4 to 6 servings

TIME 20 minutes, plus soaking and cooking time if using dried beans

INGREDIENTS

8 ounces dried white beans or 2 (15-ounce) cans Great Northern or cannellini beans

Salt

2 bay leaves, if using dried beans

1 pound asparagus

½ cup tarragon leaves

1 teaspoon packed finely grated lemon zest

2 garlic cloves, peeled

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 large lemon, juiced, plus more to taste

½ cup olive oil

PREPARATION

Step 1

If using canned beans, drain and rinse. If using dried beans, soak in plenty of water for 6 hours or overnight. Drain beans and transfer to a medium pot. Cover beans by 2 inches with water and add 1 1/2 teaspoons salt and the bay leaves. Simmer until just tender but not at all mushy, about 45 minutes to 1 1/2 hours, depending upon what kind of beans you're using. Drain.

Step 2

Break off tough ends of the asparagus. Bring a medium pot of salted water to a boil and prepare a bowl with ice and cold water. Blanch trimmed asparagus for 1 1/2 minutes, or until just cooked through but still firm, then plunge them into the ice bath. Let sit for 5 minutes, then drain. Pat dry and slice diagonally into 1/2-inch pieces.

Step 3

In a blender or food processor, combine tarragon, lemon zest, garlic, 1 teaspoon salt, the black pepper and the lemon juice, and process until garlic is chopped. Pour in olive oil. Process until mixture is well blended and bright green, about 1 minute.

Step 4

In a large mixing bowl, gently toss together beans, asparagus and dressing. Taste and add more lemon juice and salt if needed.

PRIVATE NOTES

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