

Cooking Tips for Fresh Vegetables

The first rule in preparing a side dish from farm-fresh vegetables is: LESS IS MORE! Because the vegetables you receive from New Era Farm are picked 24-48 hours before you receive them, they are at the peak of freshness. They will cook much faster than those purchased from a supermarket because they have not lost their high moisture content through long periods of transport or storage.

Simple seasonal pairings are often enough:

Sliced tomatoes, freshly diced basil, scallions, cracked pepper & a little sea salt make a heavenly salad. Layer this salad between two sliced of French bread with a garlic mayonnaise & it becomes a light lunch or supper option. Add prosciutto or a slice of your favorite cheese & you've climbed the whole food pyramid.

Green beans fresh from the garden can be steamed until al dente or sautéed in olive oil & tossed with fresh thyme, sea salt; add slivered almonds for protein/crunch. In hot weather, blanch in boiling water for just 2 minutes, chill & serve with a citrus- based dressing or toss them in Tamari with a touch of brown sugar & freshly grated ginger for a “teriyaki” preparation.

Peas make a great addition to pasta dishes & you don't even have to cook them! Simply cook the pasta, drain and add the raw peas immediately; that the heat of the pasta cooks them perfectly. Toss this mixture with some finely diced fresh garlic, olive oil, freshly grated Parmesan cheese and chopped walnuts for a great but light entrée or serve as a side to your favorite grilled meat, poultry or fish.

Chard or spinach retains the maximum nutritional benefit when cooked as lightly as possible. Simply wash the greens & spin lightly to remove most of the excess water. In a large skillet brown whole garlic cloves in olive oil, removing the cloves when brown. Place your freshly washed greens into the hot garlic infused oil, cover & remove from heat. After 1-2 minutes, turn the greens to allow them to wilt evenly. When ready to serve, dress with lemon juice or a small amount of balsamic vinegar or use as a bed for grilled fish, chicken, or poached eggs.

For more ideas – see some simple recipes on this page or check out the cookbooks in our resource section.