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Salmon and Green Bean Salad

If there's one entrée that defines "the ultimate summer meal" for me, it's my friend Karen's Salmon and Green Bean Salad. When our green beans are ready for harvest, this is the first meal I make with them.

My husband and I have this salad at least once a week during peak green bean season. Its ease of preparation and sensational flavor make it a favorite. Just add a loaf of crusty bread and a glass of your favorite local white wine for a summer meal that's perfect patio or picnic fare.

1 ½ lbs. young, slender, fresh green beans
1 can red or pink salmon, drained and boned, with skin removed, flaked (Can substitute 1 pound of cold poached or grilled salmon with skin removed, flaked)
4 oz. smoked salmon (not lox), flaked
¾ cup finely chopped red onion
1/3 cup best quality olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
4 tablespoons fresh, finely chopped dill
½ tsp. dry mustard
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Rinse the green beans under cold water.

Snap or cut off the ends of the beans.

Snap or cut them into 1 inch pieces, and place them in large pot of boiling water until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes.

Drain the beans and place them in large bowl of ice water until completely cool--about 5-10 minutes.

Drain the cooled beans and pat them dry with paper towels.

Place beans in large serving bowl. Add the flaked salmon and chopped onion and combine gently with a rubber spatula.

In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, dill, and dry mustard until completely blended.

Pour the dressing over the beans and salmon and gently stir with a rubber spatula to combine. If the salad seems a bit dry, add a tablespoon or two of olive oil to moisten it.

Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for 3-4 hours to allow flavors to mingle.

Serve cold or at room temperature.

Serves 4 as a main course salad.

Note: You can cook the green beans a day ahead of time and store them in a covered dish or storage bag in your refrigerator.

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