

Links Salad

Serves 10

Mama, Nana, and Grandma were all Links. Actually, Mama is still a Link. The Links, Incorporated, is sometimes called the black Junior League. Mama invented this salad—which is green and white, Links colors, but doesn't involve lettuce—for her Links club meeting when she was first starting to think about healthy eating.

I fixed this dish at one of my earliest Sunday dinners in Oxford, Mississippi. It's the first recipe I served that people ask me how to make for themselves. Links Salad is just that good, and that simple, to make.

I strongly suspect this will be on the menu at my first club meeting—if I get to be a fourth-generation Link. If I get to be one soon, I've been told I will be the first fourth-generation Link in the country.

— Caroline Randall Williams

1 ½ pounds fresh green beans, ends snapped

1 cup fresh or frozen green peas

¼ cup olive oil

Salt

4 cucumbers, peeled and sliced

16 fresh basil leaves

2 lemons, halved

Pepper

1. Steam the green beans using the following method: Snap both ends off of each bean. Wash the beans in a colander that's the right size to suspend in a pot by the handles. Fill a large pot halfway with water and bring to a boil. Set the colander of beans over the boiling water, cover with a lid, and steam until crisp-tender, about 10 minutes. Set the beans aside to cool.
2. Using the same method, steam the peas until just cooked, about 2 minutes. Set the peas aside to cool.
3. Pour the olive oil into a large bowl. Whisk in 1 teaspoon salt. Toss the beans and peas with the salted olive oil.
4. Stir the cucumbers and basil into the green beans, and toss to combine. Squeeze the juice of the lemons over the vegetables, season with pepper, and toss again. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

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