

STIR-FRIED GREEN BEANS WITH COCONUT *BEAN PORIYAL*

Yield: 4 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Canola oil	3 Tbsp.
Yellow split peas, (channa dal)	2 tsp.
Black mustard seeds	1 Tbsp.
Black gram beans (urad dal), hulled	1 tsp.
Dried red chiles, whole	3 ea.
Fresh curry leaves, torn into pieces	8 ea. (12 frozen)
Cumin seeds	1 tsp.
Asafetida	1/8 tsp.
Shredded coconut, unsweetened	1/2 cup
Green beans, both ends trimmed, cut on an angle into 1-inch pieces	3/4 lb.
Salt	1 tsp. or to taste
Saambhar or rasam powder	1/2 tsp.
Water	1 cup

Method

1. Combine the oil, yellow split peas, and mustard seeds, if using, in a large wok, kadai, or frying pan over medium-high heat. Cover (the mustard seeds pop and splatter) and cook until you hear the mustard seeds crackle, 1 to 2 minutes.
2. Add the urad dal, chiles, curry leaves, and cumin and cook uncovered, stirring, 1 more minute. (Stand back; the curry leaves spit when they hit the oil.)
3. Add the asafetida and 1/4 cup of the coconut and cook, stirring, 30 seconds.
4. Add the beans and the salt and cook, stirring, 5 minutes.
5. Add the remaining 1/4 cup coconut, the saambhar or rasam powder, if using, and the water. Bring to a simmer, cover and cook until the beans are tender, about 10 minutes. Then uncover and cook, stirring often, until all of the water has evaporated, about 5 more minutes. Taste for salt and serve hot.

Note: All of the Americans for whom I cook most often seem to love coconut; I've realized finally that it's a very easy way to keep them all happy. What I like about this particular dish is that the coconut adds flavor without excessive richness. Serve this as a side dish to a more formal meal or with lentils and rice for a simple dinner at home.

Recipe credit: Suvir Saran, as presented at the 2008 Flavor, Quality and American Menus retreat.
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