

GREEN BEAN AND EGG SALAD FOR A PARTY

This is a laid-back kind of recipe. Do it my way or do it your way.

(In some circles, this is known as "Milchedig Chopped Liver." Made by both grandmothers in a wooden bowl with a curved chopper. Matter of fact, made by your/David's mother in a wooden bowl with a curved chopper before food processors were invented.)

THREE POUNDS OF GREEN BEANS - washed, trimmed, and either steamed or boiled, until still green and just tender crisp to the bite. If you have a garden full of GB, use more. Save a little of the cooking water to use in case you decide the final result is too dry.

DOZEN HARD COOKED EGGS - lower eggs gently into simmering water (tiny bubbles) in pot large enough to hold in single layer, return to simmer, simmer 14 minutes, quickly plunge into cold, running water, peel. If you have a nervous cholesterol level, use fewer eggs. (Older eggs are easier to peel than fresher eggs.) (Eggs will discolor aluminum pot, either use something else or cook something acid such as tomato sauce in it next week to remove discoloration.) (I have used hard-cooked egg substitute, but I wouldn't expect it to dazzle a party.) (Cooking virtuosity would be to simmer the eggs and steam the beans over them!)

TWO LARGE ONIONS, VIDALIA/MAUI/WALLA WALLA - peeled, sliced, and sautéed in very little butter, margarine or safflower oil, or other bland oil until soft and just starting to color. Good onions are critical to the over-all flavor of the dish. If you plan to use real mayonnaise, don't bother holding back on the fat here.

DOZEN CRACKERS - use a compatible flavor, not cheese, NO ONION OR GARLIC POWDER flavoring in crackers, read the box. Gives some texture to the dish. (Crackers are Cousin Lillian's idea.) Could use chopped nuts for texture.

MAYONNAISE, light mayonnaise, or fat free mayonnaise - The taste goes down hill as the fat decreases. Let your conscience and your cholesterol be your guides.

SALT, PEPPER, NUTMEG - to taste, as they say. I like nutmeg. Other possibilities are chili powder, curry powder, thyme, oregano. Fresh herbs would be nice. Basil leaves would turn dark if chopped in.

GARNISH OF YOUR CHOICE - whole or chopped walnuts or almonds or pistachios, parsley, cherry tomatoes, anchovies, whole basil leaves, olives, capers, etc. Coordinate seasoning and garnish.

Now you want to chop ingredients coarsely in food processor. Too fine a mixture doesn't do justice to the individual ingredients. Chop small amounts at a time in short bursts to keep coarse and dump each batch into a large bowl. First, chop the eggs, no more than 6 at a time. Then, the onions and crackers together, half of each at a time. Lastly, green beans, about a pound at a time. They will clean the goo out of the processor.

Add mayonnaise and seasonings a little at a time, mix and taste. It will be blander and a little drier when chilled. Arrange attractively with garnishes. Chill and keep cold until serving. To keep it cold at a party, I put it in a shallow container and place that container on frozen cool packs in a larger container.

For just the family, try a pound of beans, 2 - 3 eggs, one large onion, and handful of crackers. Proportions are not critical.

Mimi -- 1999