

K's Kitchen: Green bean salad with a kick

By Kathryn Reed

Summer is such a good time for salads. And with all this smoke in the air, who really wants to get the kitchen hot or to fire up the barbecue.

And with all the warm days we've been having, they are also a nice alternative.

The one below, though, isn't ideal for a main dish for most people, but it would be a complement to many entrees.



With the plethora of salad choices, it's time to skip the lettuce and venture into new terrain. But this doesn't mean having to become a vegetarian. Plenty of salads call for meat and those that don't can easily have morsels added. Bacon would be a good addition to this salad.

Staples in my summer salad repertoire include my mom's potato salad, Sue's potato salad, a friend's pasta salad, black bean-corn salad and green bean salad. The latter I adapted from my favorite grocery store when I lived in Sonoma County. Oliver's makes this delicious salad that I have re-created for the past few years and now call my own.

Until I decided to write about the green bean salad I had never measured the ingredients. So, like all recipes, make whatever adjustments you want. The first batch I made was super spicy – went a little overboard with the chili oil – and Sue needed an ice cube to cut the heat. It meant more for me. But what I have here is something that is more sesame flavored than spicy.

Green Bean Sesame Salad

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds green beans

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sliced mushrooms

4 cloves garlic, minced

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup sesame oil

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup rice vinegar

2 T hot chili oil

$\frac{1}{8}$ cup toasted sesame seeds

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced almonds (optional)

Rinse and trim green beans. Parboil or steam until lightly crunchy. Drain, cool with cold water. Put beans into mixing bowl. Add mushrooms and garlic. Toss. Add liquid ingredients. Toss. Add sesame seeds and almonds. Toss again. Best if served a few hours later to let flavors meld. Serves 6.