

Bountiful, Beautiful
BEAN & BARLEY SALAD
Serves 6-8

1 cup frozen peas (do not thaw)
2 to 3 carrots, scrubbed and chopped into 1/4-inch dice
1/2 pound chilled, cooked green beans
1 1/2 cups cooked or canned beans (preferably chickpeas or kidney beans; canned beans should be rinsed well and drained)
4 cups pearled barley, cooked and chilled
3 scallions, derooted, whites and 2 inches of green sliced
1 small unwaxed cucumber, quartered lengthwise and sliced
1/2 to 3/4 cup minced fresh herbs
About 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 to 2 lemons, halved
Coarse salt and freshly cracked black pepper
Lettuce leaves, for serving
Red and yellow cherry tomatoes, for serving
Crumbled feta or ricotta salata cheese, for serving (optional)

Bring a medium-size pot of water to a boil. Place the peas in a colander in the sink, then drop the carrot pieces into the boiling water and cook briefly, until their color brightens, about 30 seconds. When the carrots are ready, drain them over the peas (if you like, place a bowl beneath the colander to trap the carrot cooking water for a stock). Rinse the carrots and peas with cold water, and drain well. In a large bowl, combine the carrots and peas with the green beans, chickpeas, barley, scallions, cucumber, and herbs. Toss together well. Drizzle with the olive oil and squeeze the lemons over the salad (through a strainer to catch the seeds, or pick them out if you don't mind fiddly work). Season with salt and pepper, toss again, and add more oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste—whatever you think it needs. But the beauty of this dish is that it is not swimming in dressing; the good grainy flavors and the vegetables are not obscured.

Serve the salad on lettuce leaves, surrounded by cherry tomatoes and sprinkled with crumbled feta, if you like. Serves 6 to 8 Note: If you buy your pearled barley in a box, simply prepare it according to the package directions. If you purchase it in bulk, however, follow these basic cooking instructions: Combine 1 cup pearled barley and 2 cups water in a medium-size pot and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover, and let cook for 30 minutes. After the time is up, turn off the heat and let the barley sit, still covered, until the grain is soft and tender, another 10 minutes.

Source: Bean by Bean Cookbook