

Our State eats

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Old-Fashioned Green Beans & Potatoes With Fatback

Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

- 4 ounces fatback, cut into small cubes (see Fat Fact)
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 cups water, plus more if needed
- 1 pound fresh green beans, preferably sturdy pole beans with strings removed, broken into bite-size lengths
- 12 ounces very small new potatoes (such as Red Bliss or Baby Dutch), scrubbed, unpeeled, and halved, if larger than a walnut
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper, or to taste
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley

In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, cook fatback for 5 minutes or until it begins to render, stirring often. Reduce the heat to medium-low and continue cooking until fully rendered and golden brown, about 10 to 15 minutes more. Using a slotted spoon, transfer fatback to a bowl, leaving the grease in the pan.

Stir onion into the fat and cook until beginning to soften, about 3 minutes, stirring often. Add 2 cups water. Simmer pole beans until nearly tender, 20 to 30 minutes, before adding the potatoes. If using slender, stringless beans, add to water and proceed immediately to the next step.



Scatter potatoes over beans and push them down into the liquid with a spoon. If there is not enough liquid to submerge the potatoes, add water to cover.

FAT FACT

There are a number of different types of seasoning meats that are labeled as “fatback.” Ideally, the one you find is fresh and either unsalted or lightly cured. If the fatback you’re using is coated in gritty salt, rinse it thoroughly under cool running water and blot it dry before cooking.

Cover the pan and simmer until the potatoes are tender but not falling apart, 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small, shallow pan, spread the cubes of cooked fatback in a single layer. Bake at 400° until deeply golden and crisp, about 10 minutes, stirring once midway. Let stand until ready to serve.

Remove the pan of vegetables from the heat. Stir in vinegar, sugar, and pepper. Check seasoning, although the rendered fatback should have provided enough salt. Cover and let stand (off heat) for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley and the reserved fatback cubes. Serve warm.

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