



MALAKHTO

This cold summer dish is eaten in vast quantities in Adjara, in the southwest of Georgia along the Black Sea. It is obviously reminiscent of pkhali, although its texture is not as fine.

When fresh green beans are unavailable, you can make this dish exactly as it's written, but substituting fresh sweet peas in their tender pods. Don't bother using canned green beans, peas, or soybeans... but the frozen kind work fine.

Served together with hot corncakes (mchadi) and cheese, this dish is sure to please.



INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds green beans
- 4 ounces fresh, shelled walnuts, roughly chopped (about 1 cup)
- 3-4 cloves garlic
- Small bunch cilantro, minced (2 1/2 ounces, 1/4 cup minced)
- 1 sprig winter or summer savory, or substitute 1 sprig fresh rosemary, minced
- 1 hot, long green pepper, or 1 small jalapeño pepper, chopped
- Small bunch basil, minced (2 1/2 ounces)
- Verjus (juice from unripe grapes), or substitute lemon juice
- Salt and freshly-ground pepper

1 Trim the green beans and cook them in one of two ways: Steam them until they are quite soft, 7-9 minutes in a steamer basket set over a little water in a large pot. **Or, in a large saucepan, bring a few inches of salted water to a boil.** Boil the beans until they are soft, about 6 minutes after the water has come back to a boil. Either way, let the cooked beans cool in a colander.

2 In a food processor or meat grinder, grind the beans, walnuts, garlic, salt, savory (or rosemary), cilantro, basil, and green pepper. (Lovers of authenticity will torment themselves doing this in a mortar and pestle.) The mix should be consistent, with no big pieces, but it shouldn't be mushy or smooth.

3 Taste the mixture. Does it need some acidity? (Georgians expect their vegetables to tilt a bit towards the sour or acidic.) If so, add the verjus or lemon juice. Now mix it all again thoroughly with a wooden spoon.

You have a choice: You may eat it immediately. Or you can stick it in the refrigerator for a couple hours. The juices will permeate the dish evenly, and it's heavenly to eat the dish cold when it's summer outside.

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