

Broccoli with Olive Oil & Garlic

serves 6

Lightly blanched broccoli, lightly coated with olive oil and fresh garlic. Simple and delicious! Grow your own broccoli and enjoy it even more, or buy direct from a farmer and support local agriculture. This goes nicely with many different menus.

1 bunch broccoli
1 T. extra virgin olive oil
2 cloves garlic, finely minced

1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. freshly ground pepper
1 lemon, wedged, for garnish

Cut the bottom inch or so off of the broccoli stems. Cut the stem off from the crown (where the florets are), leaving the florets about 3" long. Peel the stem with a paring knife and cut into 1/2" thick rounds or 1/2" thick long matchsticks. Cut the crown into chunky florets. Peel as much of the stem off each floret as possible. Do this by sliding the point of the knife under the stem at the bottom of the floret, and pulling the skin back toward the crown. When you have peeled back to the crown, break the peel off with a sure and rapid twisting motion. Set aside.

Boil one quart of water in a 2-quart pot on high heat. Add the broccoli, put the lid on the pot, and remove the lid as soon as the water returns to a boil. After 1½–2 minutes, drain in a strainer. Shake the broccoli dry and transfer back into the dry pot. Add the olive oil, garlic, salt, and pepper. Sauté for 1 minute on medium high heat, allowing the broccoli to absorb and assimilate the flavors. Garnish with lemon wedges, and edible flowers if available. Lemon juice, vinegar, or other acidic liquids turn green vegetables a drab, military green if added ahead of time. I always add these ingredients once they have made their way on to the final dining plates.

Serve with almost any meal, lunch or dinner. Pass a cruet of aged balsamic vinegar, freshly grated parmesan, and a pepper mill at the table. You can follow the above directions for peeling and cooking the broccoli, but serve it with butter instead of olive oil. The leftovers can be served cold, plain or added to a green or grain salad. For a simple, quick, and nourishing meal, serve with brown rice, roasted sweet potatoes, and a salad.