

Broad beans on garlic toast with sorrel, lemon balm & verbena dressing

Lemon, feta and broad beans are common bedfellows, so, in my enthusiasm to eat as locally as possible, I set to making a lemon-free lemony dressing.

Enter lemon balm (smells like Jif, but takes much better), lemon verbena (sherbet dip in herb form) and sorrel (absolute thug of a plant with a very useful sharp citrus kick), the combination of which creates a mown-grass-meets-smashed-lemon dressing. The calendula petals are a showy finish but they bring a mild peppery hit that works nicely with a good olive oil.

1 serving
15 minutes

100g peas in their pods

300g broad beans in their pods

1 tbsp chopped lemon verbena

1 tbsp chopped lemon balm

1 tbsp chopped sorrel

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling

100g feta

1 slice sourdough bread

1 garlic clove

Calendula leaves, to serve if available

Baby sorrel leaves, to serve if available

Pop the peas and broad beans out of their pods and simmer in boiling water for 3 minutes. Drain and denude any larger broad beans of their pale green jackets.

Mix half of the chopped herbs with two tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil and a pinch of salt. Pour this dressing over the warm peas and beans and set aside to mingle.

Put the rest of the herbs and the feta in the small tub of a food processor and whizz until creamy – it can take a minute or so. Topping done.

For the toast, drizzle a little extra virgin olive oil over both sides of the bread. Set a griddle pan over a high heat whilst you peel the garlic clove, halve it and rub it vigorously all over the bread slice. Really give it some welly. (I know it sounds like a cheffy faff, but the flavour really comes through.) Once the griddle is smoking hot, fry the bread for 3-5 minutes on each side until charred and tempting.

To assemble the dish, slather the hot toast with the herby feta, then pile the bean mixture on top. Shower with a few calendula petals, a baby sorrel leaf, a kiss of extra virgin olive oil, then serve.

