

These Are a Few of My Favorite (Green) Things



I'm Irish and particularly fond of St. Patrick's Day. By the time you read this, Chicago will have dyed the river green and I will have witnessed the event. They do it the weekend before St. Patrick's Day now, so when the holiday lands later in the week they manage to make an entire week-long celebration. I don't celebrate all week long but I definitely partake in some of the festivities. I have friends coming from Wisconsin the day after St. Patrick's Day and we will be laughing all weekend long.

The color of Irish celebrations is Kelly green, so today I thought I'd share some of my favorite things; my favorite green things.

I'll start with **emeralds**. Not that I have a lot of them. I have one in particular that was my engagement ring. We didn't do the on-bended-knee kind of engagement. Rather my husband (then fiancé) asked me to stop by the jewelry store with him after work one night. Of course I knew what was going to happen. We were already business partners so there was no way for him to spend that kind of money as a surprise so that was his way of saying it was time.

When we got to the store I was looking at diamonds. I was not paying attention to what he was doing. He eventually called me over. I strolled to the counter and looked down. I said something about how these were pretty colored stones, and he announced he wanted to get me an emerald for my engagement ring. Never occurred to me to go color. I was intrigued. The clerk was intrigued too. She asked why... and my husband related that the first day he met me I was wearing an emerald green blouse and he'd never forget the first time he saw me.

The clerk cried. I beamed.

My second favorite green thing (not necessarily in order) is grilled **asparagus**. Instead of boiling asparagus, try it on your grill this spring. Spray with olive oil and dust with grated sea salt. Grilled asparagus is better than potato chips any day. Served hot or cold, I promise they will be a hit... and suggest they eat them with their fingers; makes them even more fun.

Up third...the green grass of Ireland. I'll never forget flying into Dublin. I was told to manage my expectations of Ireland or I'd be disappointed. Oh contraire! They say there are 47 colors of green in the Irish countryside. It was a sunny day when we flew in and I swear I saw all 47. I almost cried. My expectations were blown away.

Pistachios are another favorite green item. Most people don't think of pistachios as green because they are only looking at the shell. I love the whole experience of cracking them open and eating them. Pistachios have benefits. They have fewer calories, more potassium and more vitamin K than other nuts. They are high in fiber and help lower cholesterol. That's one mighty little nut.

Granny Smith Apples come in at number 5. Beautiful, round, Granny Smith apples. I use them to make my mother's apple crisp

recipe. The smell of warm apple crisp baking in my oven transports me to times with my mother, and all is good.

And lastly, one of my favorite green things is actually a bug. I love the **praying mantis**. A praying mantis is a sight to behold. They are really the mantis but since they look like they are praying, they got that added nickname. They are a relative of the cockroach, but I don't hold that against them. I try to have them in my garden each summer.

Mantids eat bugs. They eat the pesky bugs in your garden, but they might eat the good ones too. They are always looking out for prey; even butterflies, bumble bees, caterpillars, and of course, the females are known to eat their mates after mating. I love an interesting bug.

I wish you all the happiest St. Patrick's Day. Take it easy on the green beer. That's an American invention. St. Patrick's Day, (until recently) was purely a religious holiday in Ireland and a celebration of the Irish culture. I like to focus on the cultural aspects. I'll be watching Irish dancing on the day. You can bet on that.

Cheers!