

Recipes... ASPARAGUS



TIPS & TRICKS: Refrigerate asparagus standing upright in a container or water. This keeps the spears fresh and crisp. If this isn't possible, wrap the asparagus at the base with a damp towel. Just remember: the sooner you eat it, the better the flavor. The part of the spear rich in green color will be tender enough to eat. For preparation, the fastest and easiest way is to hold the ends and bend the spear until it breaks somewhere in the middle—everything from the middle up will be tender enough to eat easily.

ROASTED ASPARAGUS

1 pound (approx 14 spears) asparagus
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
Salt & freshly ground pepper to taste
1 teaspoons balsamic vinegar

Preheat oven to 450°F.

Snap off the tough ends of asparagus and, if desired, peel the stalks. Toss the asparagus with oil and season with salt and pepper. Spread the asparagus in a single layer in a shallow roasting pan or baking sheet with sides. (If the pan is not large enough, use two pans.) Roast until tender and browned, 10 to 15 minutes, shaking once during roasting. Sprinkle with balsamic vinegar and toss. Taste and adjust seasonings. Let cool to room temperature; serve within 2 hours.

ASPARAGUS SOUP

2 cups chicken broth
1/4 cup water
1 yellow-fleshed potato, such as Yukon Gold (6 ounces), peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1 medium shallot, thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, thinly sliced
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon dried savory or marjoram leaves
1/8 teaspoon salt
12 ounces (approx 12 spears) asparagus, woody ends removed, sliced into 1-inch pieces
1 1/2 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto, chopped
Freshly ground pepper to taste

Place broth, water, potato, shallot, garlic, thyme, savory (or marjoram) and salt in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until the potato is tender, about 8 minutes. Add asparagus, return to a simmer, and cook, covered, until the asparagus is tender, about 5 minutes more.

Meanwhile, cook prosciutto in a small skillet over medium heat, stirring, until crisp, about 5 minutes.

Pour the soup into a large blender or food processor (see Tip); puree until smooth, scraping down the sides if necessary. Season with pepper. Serve topped with the crisped prosciutto.

LEMOM LOVERS ASPARAGUS

2 bunches asparagus, tough ends trimmed
2 lemons, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 teaspoons chopped fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

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Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.

Toss asparagus, lemon slices, oil, oregano, salt and pepper on a large rimmed baking sheet. Roast, shaking the pan occasionally to toss, until the asparagus is tender-crisp, 13 to 15 minutes.

CHILI SPICED ASPARAGUS

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
2 bunches asparagus, tough ends trimmed, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 tablespoon water
1 1/2 teaspoons chili powder or 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
3/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sherry vinegar or red-wine vinegar

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add asparagus and water; cook, stirring often, 4 to 5 minutes. Add chili powder (or paprika), garlic powder and salt; cook until the asparagus is tender-crisp, about 1 minute. Remove from heat, add vinegar and stir to coat.

CREAMY ASPARAGUS PASTA

4 ounces whole-wheat penne pasta (about 1 1/2 cups)
1/2 bunch asparagus, trimmed and cut into 3/4-inch pieces
3/4 cup whole milk
2 teaspoons whole-grain mustard
2 teaspoons flour
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons minced garlic
1 teaspoon minced fresh tarragon or 1/4 teaspoon dried
1/4 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, divided

Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Cook pasta for 6 minutes. Add asparagus and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until the pasta and asparagus are just tender, about 3 minutes more. Drain and return to the pot.

Meanwhile, whisk milk, mustard, flour, salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Heat oil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant and lightly browned, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Whisk in the milk mixture. Bring to a simmer, stirring constantly, and cook until thickened, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in tarragon, lemon zest and juice.

Stir the sauce into the cooked pasta and place over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until the sauce is thick, creamy and coats the pasta. Stir 1/4 cup Parmesan into the pasta until combined. Serve the pasta topped with the remaining 1/4 cup Parmesan.

ASAPAGUS GUACAMOLE

24 spears fresh asparagus, trimmed and coarsely chopped
1/2 cup salsa
1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
2 cloves garlic

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4 green onions, sliced

Place the asparagus in a pot with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, and cook 5 minutes, until tender but firm. Drain, and rinse with cold water.

Place the asparagus, salsa, cilantro, garlic, and green onions in a food processor or blender, and process to desired consistency. Refrigerate 1 hour, or until chilled, before serving.

ASPARAGUS & CASHEWS

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons sesame oil
1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger root
1 bunch asparagus stalks, ends cut
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1/2 cup chopped cashews

Heat olive oil and sesame oil in a wok over low to medium heat. Add ginger, and stir-fry until slightly brown. Add asparagus, and stir-fry for a few minutes before adding soy sauce and cashews. Cook until asparagus is tender but still crisp and bright green, stirring frequently.

ASPARAGUS WITH SLICED ALMONDS AND PARMESAN

2 tablespoons butter
1 pound asparagus, bottoms trimmed
1/3 cup sliced almonds
1/3 cup Parmesan cheese

Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the asparagus, and cook, stirring, about 3 minutes. Stir in almonds and parmesan, and cook until the cheese is slightly browned, about 3 to 5 minutes.

ASPARAGUS PARMESAN

1 tablespoon butter
1/4 cup olive oil
1 pound fresh asparagus spears, trimmed
3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
salt and pepper to taste

Melt butter with olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add asparagus spears, and cook, stirring occasionally for about 10 minutes, or to desired firmness. Drain off excess oil, and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper.

SIMPLY STEAMED ASPARAGUS

1 bunch asparagus spears
1 teaspoon butter
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 cups water

Place water in the bottom half of a steamer pan set. Add salt and butter, and bring to a boil.

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Trim the dry ends off of the asparagus. If the spears are thick, peel them lightly with a vegetable peeler. Place them in the top half of the steamer pan set. Steam for 5 to 10 minutes depending on the thickness of the asparagus, or until asparagus is tender.

ASPARAGUS CASSEROLE

WHITE SAUCE

2 teaspoons butter
4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 1/2 cups milk
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

CASSEROLE

1/2 cup dry bread crumbs, browned in butter
20 asparagus tips
5 hard-cooked eggs, chopped

To Make White Sauce: Melt butter in a small skillet over medium low heat; stir in flour, then milk. Cook until thickened and season with salt and pepper.

Spread 1/2 of the browned bread crumbs in the bottom of a 9x13 inch baking dish. Add layers of asparagus and chopped egg, alternately. Pour White Sauce over all and top with remaining bread crumbs. Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes.

ASPARAGUS WITH GARLIC & ONIONS

1/4 cup water
1/2 pound fresh asparagus, trimmed
1/2 cup diced white onion
3 tablespoons butter
salt and black pepper to taste
2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

Pour water into a skillet. Place asparagus and onion in the skillet. Bring water to a boil over medium heat. Cover skillet and steam asparagus and onion 2 to 5 minutes, just until slightly tender. Add a few tablespoons of extra water, if needed, to maintain steam.

When water has steamed off, immediately place butter in skillet. Continue cooking until onions and asparagus are lightly browned. Mix in garlic, and continue cooking about 30 seconds. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

ASPARAGUS ROLANTINA

1 pound fresh green asparagus spears, trimmed
4 slices Swiss cheese
5 (1/2 ounce) slices prosciutto
ground black pepper to taste
4 tablespoons butter, melted
1 cup Italian-style dried bread crumbs
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

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Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Lower asparagus into the water, and cook for 1 minute, 2 minutes if the spears are thick.

Lay one slice of meat on a plate. Layer a slice of cheese on top of the slice of meat. Place 3 to 4 asparagus spears at one end of the cheese and meat, and sprinkle with black pepper to taste. Roll the cheese and meat up over the asparagus, and secure with a toothpick. Place asparagus rolls in a casserole dish. Once all of the asparagus rolls have been arranged in the casserole dish, pour melted butter over the entire dish. Sprinkle with bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese.

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the crumb mixture has formed a crust over the asparagus rolls.

EASY ASPARAGUS

1 tablespoon olive oil
1/4 cup sliced purple onion
1 clove garlic, chopped
salt and pepper to taste
lemon pepper to taste
10 spears fresh asparagus
2 tablespoons white wine
1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon crushed whole wheat crackers

Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Mix in onion and garlic, and season with salt, pepper, and lemon pepper. Cook and stir until tender. Place asparagus in the skillet, and cook 8 minutes, turning occasionally to coat with seasonings. Sprinkle wine into the skillet, and scrape up any browned bits.

Transfer asparagus to a shallow dish. Drizzle with remaining mixture in skillet, and dust evenly with Parmesan cheese and crushed whole wheat crackers.

ASPARAGUS STIR FRY

1/2 cup chicken broth
1 tablespoon sherry
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon dry mustard
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 pounds fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1 inch pieces

In a bowl, mix the broth, sherry, soy sauce, cider vinegar, cornstarch, sugar, dry mustard, and salt. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Mix the asparagus into the skillet, coating with the oil. Cook and stir 5 minutes, until tender but firm. Pour the broth mixture over the asparagus, and continue cooking 5 minutes, until thickened and heated through.

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PICKLED ASPARAGUS

30 asparagus spears
1/3 cup coarse salt
2 quarts cold water
1 2/3 cups distilled white vinegar
2/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon coarse salt
1 teaspoon mustard seed
1 1/2 teaspoons dill seed
1 white onion, sliced into rings
1/2 teaspoon chili pepper flakes
2 sprigs fresh dill

Trim the cut end of the asparagus spears, and cut them into 3 inch lengths. Place them in a large bowl with 1/3 cup salt, and cover with water. Let stand for 2 hours. Drain and rinse under cool water, and pat dry.

Sterilize two pint size wide mouth jars in simmering water for 5 minutes.

In a saucepan over medium heat, combine the vinegar, sugar, 1 teaspoon of salt, mustard seed, dill seed and onion rings. Bring to a boil, and boil for one minute.

Pack the asparagus spears, tips up, in the hot jars leaving 1/2 of space from the rim. Tuck one dill sprig into each jar, and sprinkle in 1/4 teaspoon of red pepper flakes. Pour hot pickling liquid into the jars, filling to within 1/4 inch of the rim. Wipe rims with a clean damp cloth, and seal with lids. Process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes.

Cool to room temperature. Check seals when cool by pressing the center of the lid. It should not move. Label and date; store in a cool dark place. If any jars have not sealed properly, refrigerate and eat within two weeks.

ASPARAGUS WITH CREAM SAUCE

2 cups water
2 pounds fresh asparagus, trimmed
1/2 cup chopped onion
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup chicken broth
1/4 cup minced fresh parsley
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 teaspoon dill weed
1 cup sour cream

In a large skillet, bring water to a boil. Add asparagus; cover and boil for 3 minutes. meanwhile, in a small skillet, saute onion in butter until tender. Stir in the flour, garlic powder, lemon-pepper and salt until blended. Gradually stir in broth. Add the parsley, vinegar and dill.

Bring to a boil; cook and stir 2 minutes or until thickened. Reduce heat to low; whisk in sour cream. Drain asparagus; arrange on a serving platter. Top with cream sauce.

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TOMATO ASPARAGUS SALAD

3/4 pound fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1 1/2 inch pieces
3 plum tomatoes, halved and sliced
3/4 cup chopped red onion
1/2 cup balsamic vinaigrette

Place asparagus in a steamer basket; place in a saucepan over 1 in. of water. Bring to a boil; cover and steam for 5-7 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain and immediately place asparagus in ice water. Drain and pat dry. In a large bowl, combine the asparagus, tomatoes and onion. Drizzle with vinaigrette and gently toss to coat. Serve with a slotted spoon.

ASPARGUS MUSHROOM CASSEROLE

4 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
1 cup chopped onion
4 tablespoons butter or stick margarine, divided
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon chicken bouillon granules
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1 cup 2% milk
14 spears of fresh asparagus, cut
1/4 cup diced pimientos
1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice
3/4 cup soft bread crumbs

In a nonstick skillet, cook mushrooms and onion in 3 tablespoons butter until tender. Remove vegetables with a slotted spoon and set aside. Stir the flour, bouillon, salt, nutmeg and pepper into drippings until smooth. Gradually add milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Stir in asparagus, pimientos, lemon juice and the mushroom mixture.

Pour into a 1-1/2-qt. baking dish coated with nonstick cooking spray. Melt remaining butter; toss with bread crumbs. Sprinkle over top. Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees F for 35-40 minutes or until heated through.