



Dressing up spring asparagus with an easy brown butter sauce - Brown Butter Asparagus with Pecans -

By: Melissa d'Arabian March 9, 2015

Remember the days when you knew spring was coming by the arrival of asparagus at the grocer? These days, fresh asparagus is available almost all year. But still, my heart leaps with joy the first moment I see asparagus for less than \$3 a pound. Then it is officially spring!

When asparagus is in season, I buy it weekly, both because it's so cheap and because it's incredibly versatile. I serve it raw with a tangy Greek yogurt or blended bean dip for a snack, or chopped up and tossed with lemon juice, freshly ground black pepper, a dash of rich extra-virgin olive oil and a few shards of Parmesan cheese.

Or I'll roast it to bring out the sweet and earthy notes. To do this, just toss the stalks in a bit of olive oil, salt and pepper, then pop in a 400 F oven for 10 minutes. Or roast asparagus for half that time, which will keep some of that bright, grassy flavor, then whiz them up in a blender with fresh herbs, chicken stock and some lime for a bright springtime soup.

For a tender, fresh take on asparagus, you also can blanch it in a pot of well-salted boiling water. The trick is to not overcook it; 45 seconds for slender stalks is plenty of time. Blanched asparagus will keep in the refrigerator and can be used to top salads, as snacks, or be added at the last second to a saute.

The best news is that you can eat asparagus with abandon! A full cup of fresh asparagus has fewer than 30 calories, yet still gives you 3 grams each of protein and fiber. Plus, it's a good source of vitamins C and A, as well as iron (a plus for non-meat-eaters).

This brown butter asparagus will be a regular on my table this spring. And it's deceptively simple. It pairs nutty browned butter with toasted pecans, which add a perfect richness and texture to the asparagus. A final small trick - using soy sauce instead of salt gives the dish a savory, umami flavor, which is a lovely companion to the earthy veggie.

BROWN BUTTER ASPARAGUS WITH PECANS

Start to finish: 15 minutes

Servings: 6

1 1/2 pounds asparagus, trimmed and cleaned

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 tablespoons pecans, chopped

1 teaspoon soy sauce

1 tablespoon lemon juice

Chopped fresh parsley, to garnish



Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil. Add the asparagus and blanch for 45 seconds (add

30 seconds if stalks are particularly thick). Using tongs, remove the asparagus and allow to drain dry on paper towels. Arrange the asparagus on a serving platter.

In a large saute pan over medium heat, melt the butter and cook until the bubbles subside and brown bits start to form, about 2 minutes. Add the pecans and stir so that nothing burns. Once the pecans are fragrant and the butter is toasty brown, stir in the soy sauce and lemon juice, then remove from the heat. Pour the pecan butter sauce over the asparagus, sprinkle with fresh parsley and serve.

Nutrition information per serving: 80 calories; 50 calories from fat (63 percent of total calories); 5 g fat (2.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 10 mg cholesterol; 5 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 3 g protein; 50 mg sodium.

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