

BLANCHED ASPARAGUS

WITH HOLLANDAISE, CRISPY PROSCIUTTO, AND SPRING SHOOTS

BY CHEF KEVIN O'CONNOR

Ingredients

1 bunch of medium-thick Asparagus
8-10 thin slices of prosciutto
A handful of sunflower shoots, pea shoots, or both
3 tablespoons salt
1 teaspoon Extra Virgin Olive Oil

For the Hollandaise

4 egg yolks
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 stick of melted unsalted butter (½ cup)
A pinch of salt
A pinch of smoked paprika, cayenne, or chili powder

Directions

1. To make the crispy prosciutto, start by preheating the oven to 375°F. Lay the prosciutto flat onto a parchment-lined baking sheet, making sure the slices are not overlapping. Bake for 13-15 minutes, rotating the baking sheet halfway through or until the fat turns golden and the meat darkens. Using tongs, remove the prosciutto from the baking sheet and transfer it to a paper towel-lined plate. Set aside and allow to cool.
2. Rinse the asparagus, then snap off and discard the bottoms. Bring 2 quarts of water to a boil in a saucepan and season with 2 tablespoons of salt. Prepare a large bowl of ice water, seasoned with the remaining 1 tablespoon of salt. Holding the tip of the asparagus and rotating while you work, peel the bottom ¾ of the spears with a vegetable peeler. This step is optional but suggested for larger asparagus. Place the peeled asparagus into the boiling water; boil until tender (3-4 minutes) and immediately remove and transfer to the ice water. Allow the asparagus to cool completely in the ice water before removing, draining, and setting aside.
3. Vigorously whisk the egg yolks and lemon juice together in a glass or stainless steel bowl until the mixture is thickened. Bring the bowl to a pot of simmering water and place it over the top to create a double boiler. Make sure the bottom of the bowl isn't touching the water. Continue whisking the egg and lemon mixture, not letting it get too hot or scrambled. While whisking vigorously, slowly pour in the melted butter. Continue whisking until the mixture is thickened and doubled in volume. Remove from heat, whisk in the cayenne and salt, and use immediately or set aside (covered) in a warm place. If the sauce is too thick, whisk in a few droplets of warm water before serving.
4. To serve, lightly toss the asparagus spears in the extra virgin olive oil before placing them on a large plate. Spoon the hollandaise over the asparagus before crumbling the crispy prosciutto over the top. Finish with a scattering of sunflower and pea shoots.

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