

ASPARAGUS WITH GARLIC AND PARMESAN

In the interests of at least *trying* to be a little bit healthy, I've tried through the years to find recipes for vegetables that taste good without being deep fried. For years I have cooked asparagus outside on my grill with a bit of olive oil and some seasoning. It's tastes great, but for those who don't have a grill or don't want to use their grill in the dead of winter, outdoor cooking isn't appropriate. I don't recall where I found this recipe, but I made a few changes, it's easy to cook, and it tastes great! Pencil thin asparagus will cook (and burn) more quickly than finger sized spears, so pay attention and keep your eye on it.

INGREDIENTS:

2 Tablespoons Olive Oil
1 Tablespoon Butter
2 teaspoons Garlic, minced
1 Pound (bunch) Asparagus, ends trimmed
2 Tablespoons Parmesan Cheese, grated
¼ teaspoon Salt
1/8 teaspoon Pepper
½ Lemon (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

Rinse the asparagus, then cut off an inch or so from the bottom ends and set aside.

In a small saucepan, heat the olive oil and garlic over medium-low heat until just simmering, then reduce heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes or until the garlic is straw colored.

Put your largest frying pan on the stove, and carefully pour the garlic infused oil into the frying pan without allowing the garlic pieces into the pan. Feel free to use a strainer if you like.

Turn the burner up to medium and add the butter. Once the butter is melted, add half of the asparagus facing one way, and the rest facing the other direction. Using tongs, arrange the spears into an even layer. Cover and cook for 3 minutes for thin spears, or 5 minutes for thick spears.

Uncover, bump the heat up to 9 (out of 10), and season with the salt and pepper. Cook until the spears are tender and well browned on 1 side. Using your tongs, occasionally move spears from the middle to the edge of your pan to make sure everything browns and nothing burns. Cook about 5 minutes for thin spears and 7 min for thick.

Transfer asparagus to a serving dish, sprinkle with Parmesan, and if desired, squeeze lemon over your masterpiece.

Serve immediately.