



## ABSOLUTELY ASPARAGUS

by Barb Kemp

April launches us into spring, bringing a plethora of fresh produce that begins with asparagus. Green asparagus is as common as rain is in Vancouver. However, hunt through the farm market stalls and you'll find white and purple asparagus as well. Whether you like thick stalks or thin stalks, it's an individual choice. Myself, I prefer the thin stalks.

The coolest way to cook asparagus is in an asparagus cooker. This is a cylindrical stainless steel pot which stands taller than your typical asparagus. The asparagus stalks are placed standing upright in a metal

basket which is then immersed in the pot of boiling water. The delicate tips are left exposed and are steamed so as not to be overcooked.

The best way to cook asparagus (this is my personal bias) is by roasting or grilling. When roasted, the green asparagus stalks become caramelized and slightly charred, firm but tender, and unbelievably delightful.

As winter thaws its way into spring, be sure to take advantage of the fresh produce heading to the markets, and of course, don't forget the asparagus.

### PASTA WITH FRESH BASIL AND ASPARAGUS

Serves 2

- 250 grams dry linguine
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 clove garlic
- ½ red onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ½ pound mushrooms
- 2 Roma tomatoes, diced
- 1 pound asparagus, broken into 1" pieces
- ½ cup fresh basil chopped
- Fresh parmesan cheese

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onions and garlic and sauté 5 minutes. Add red pepper flakes and mushrooms, and sauté 3 minutes. Add tomatoes, asparagus and basil, and sauté 2 more minutes. Turn down heat and let simmer while you cook the linguine in a pot of boiling salted water until al dente. Drain pasta, add vegetable mixture and toss to combine. Serve passing freshly grated parmesan cheese.

### ROASTED ASPARAGUS

Serves 4

- 1 ½ pounds asparagus, tough ends snapped off
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Toss asparagus with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place asparagus on a baking sheet and roast in oven 4-8 minutes.

Barb Kemp is a facilitator and a writer on healthy food and cooking. [www.recipestotherescue.ca](http://www.recipestotherescue.ca)

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