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ASK AUNT DAISY

Asparagus is Popular



EVERY spring asparagus becomes more and more in demand. Of course, we use canned asparagus all the year round, and asparagus rolls in thin, fresh bread are quite an everyday snack. But the fresh asparagus which makes its appearance in the spring is always a surprise in flavour and a quite different affair altogether. The arrival of fresh asparagus, young new carrots and green peas really show us that winter is over, and we realise that with all our canning, preserving and even deep-freezing we can never quite keep the real flavour and taste which old Mother Nature provides. Did you know that asparagus was eaten in Roman times and that it was in general use in many parts of Europe even 400 years ago! Wild asparagus was used by ordinary folk, and cultivated asparagus produced large spears up to 1/4 lb. in size!

To Cook

After washing under the running tap to get out any soil or sand lay the stalks in a wide enough pan, sprinkle with a very little salt, pour on boiling water to a depth of about an inch or so, cover and boil gently for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the lower ends, tested with a fork, are tender-crisp. Do not over cook or the heads drop off the stalks. You should have cut off the tough ends beforehand and scraped any scaly bits off the stalks with a sharp knife. Lift out carefully with a wide perforated egg-slice, so as not to break them.

To Serve

Asparagus is generally served by itself as a first course. Put 3 to 4 cooked stalks on a neat slice of hot toast (to absorb the moisture) and pour a little melted butter over or sprinkle asparagus with a little salt and pepper. Melt 1/4 cup butter. If desired it may be browned slightly when melting. Pour it over asparagus either plain, or with one of the following added: A few drops lemon juice, minced parsley or chives, a few capers, a sprinkle of nutmeg, a little minced onion or garlic, a little prepared mustard, a little grated cheese, or a few crisp bacon bits.

Ham and Asparagus Rolls

Use fresh cooked asparagus. Grill thin slices of uncooked ham on both sides. On each slice of ham place several stalks of asparagus. Then roll up the ham slices. On each roll of ham and asparagus serve a generous amount of thin, rich cheese sauce. In the top of a double boiler melt 1/4 packet processed cheese (i.e., 1/8 lb.). Gradually add 1/2 cup milk, stirring all the time till smooth. Or serve the rolls without sauce if preferred.

Asparagus Continental

Use thin green asparagus and cut tender parts into pieces a little larger than peas. Cook about 5 minutes in boiling salted water, then drain. Put a small piece of butter in a saucepan and, when hot, stir in a little castor sugar and about 2 tablespoons water. Add the par-boiled asparagus, cover saucepan and simmer very slowly 20 minutes. Remove asparagus and thicken sauce with a little flour, then just before serving, stir in a beaten egg-yolk. Pour this sauce over asparagus and serve at once. Alternatively, after the little pieces of asparagus have been par-boiled, heat a piece of butter in a saucepan, add some

finely chopped parsley and young lettuce leaves, 2 or 3 small whole onions, a pinch of salt, pepper and nutmeg and flour and a little water. Cook a few minutes, stirring. Then put in asparagus and simmer very gently 20 minutes.

Creamed Asparagus

Heat thin cream, top milk or unsweetened evaporated milk. Season with salt, pepper, butter and minced parsley. Pour over hot cooked asparagus. Or make a thin white sauce, using some of the asparagus water instead of all milk, and adding a chopped hard-boiled egg as well as asparagus.

Asparagus and New Peas

Two cups hot cooked asparagus cut into inch lengths, 3 1/2 cups hot cooked

QUEEN'S CHOCOLATE CAKE

FOUR eggs, 6 oz. sugar, 4 1/2 oz. flour, 1 tablespoon cornflour, 1 small teaspoon baking soda, 2 small teaspoons cream of tartar. Heat 2 tablespoons of butter and 1 tablespoon of milk in a saucepan. Mix in a cup 1 heaped tablespoon of cocoa in 3 tablespoons of water, and add this to mixture in saucepan. Bring all to boiling point. Beat eggs and sugar until light and fluffy. Sift in flour, cornflour, cream of tartar and baking soda. Mix with mixing spoon and lastly add the boiling mixture from the saucepan. Place in 8-inch sandwich tins and bake in oven 375 degrees, with top heat off and bottom heat at low for about 20 minutes.

Filling: Fill with mock cream, made with 3 tablespoons icing sugar and 2 tablespoons butter. Beat butter and sugar, add 1 1/2 tablespoons boiling water and 1 1/2 tablespoons cold milk.

Icing: Ice with thin layer of butter icing, made from icing sugar and melted butter, thinned with milk, and flavoured with a small teaspoonful of peppermint essence. Allow to dry and ice on top with chocolate icing. Decorate with grated chocolate.

peas, 2 tablespoons melted butter, salt and pepper to taste. Just mix them all together—a delightful combination.

Asparagus Cigarettes

Roll thin 3-inch tips of cooked, drained asparagus in thin triangular slices of fresh white bread first dusted with grated cheese. Brush with melted butter and grill or toast until brown.

Asparagus Souffle (Good)

Two tablespoons melted butter, 3 tablespoons flour, 1 cup milk, 4 eggs, 2 1/2 cups diced, cooked asparagus, 3/4 teaspoon salt. Make sauce by blending in small saucepan, butter and flour, add milk gradually and cook slowly until thickened, stirring constantly. Beat egg yolks until thick and lemon coloured and add to the sauce, stirring constantly. Add asparagus and salt. Beat egg whites until stiff and fold into asparagus mixture. Pour into buttered casserole set in pan of hot water and bake in slow oven (325 degrees or regulo 3) about 45 minutes.

Asparagus in Milk

If the asparagus does not look quite perfect, cut the stalks into inch lengths and put in the top of a double boiler with just enough milk to cover. Put the lid on tightly and cook over hot water till tender. Then add for every cup of

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