

ROASTED FRESH GREEN ASPARAGUS WITH A POACHED DUCK EGG AND HOLLANDAISE

INGREDIENTS

1 pound medium-thickness fresh green asparagus
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and pepper
4 duck eggs

For the hollandaise

4 egg yolks
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted (1 stick)
Pinch cayenne
Pinch salt

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 400F.

Break off the tough ends of the asparagus and, if they're thick, peel them. Place the asparagus on a baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil, then toss to coat the asparagus completely. Spread the asparagus in a single layer and sprinkle liberally with salt and pepper. Roast the asparagus for 25 minutes, until tender but still crisp.

Meanwhile, make the hollandaise. Vigorously whisk the egg yolks and lemon juice together in a stainless steel bowl and until the mixture is thickened and doubled in volume. Place the bowl over a saucepan containing barely simmering water (or use a double boiler,) the water should not touch the bottom of the bowl. Continue to whisk rapidly. Be careful not to let the eggs get too hot or they will scramble. Slowly drizzle in the melted butter and continue to whisk until the sauce is thickened and doubled in volume. Remove from heat, whisk in cayenne and salt. Cover and place in a warm spot until ready to use for the asparagus.

Finally, poach your duck eggs (1 per person). Bring a large pan of water to the boil and heavily season with salt and one tablespoon of vinegar. Crack the eggs into 4 individual cups and, using a whisk, stir the vinegar water vigorously to create a whirlpool. Working quickly, gently place the eggs one by one into the center of the whirlpool and allow the water to simmer. Poach the eggs for approximately 4 to 4 1/2 minutes until still runny inside. Lift from the water with a slotted spoon and dab on a paper towel to get rid of some of the excess water.

Divide the asparagus between 4 plates and top each with a poached egg. Drizzle with hollandaise. If the sauce gets too thick, whisk in a few drops of warm water before serving. Sprinkle with cayenne and a pinch of salt.