

Asparagus Pesto

By Jane Steele
Photo by Marty Snortum Studio

I make more of an effort now to shop for a variety of different vegetables, but asparagus still tops my list of all-time favorites. It can be prepared in minutes. You can blanch it, broil it, grill it, sear it, or eat it raw. However you cook it, it always seems to please. Both of my kids love asparagus, but only the tips. When my daughter first started to walk, she would toddle up to the table and open her mouth whenever she caught sight of the green stalks. She'd bite off the tip of my asparagus, turn to father and toddle off for his. We thought it was so cute back then. We don't anymore.



This recipe is perfect for a spring luncheon because it can all be made ahead of time and left to fend for itself while you enjoy the day. For a heartier version, add grilled chicken or shrimp. The one thing you cannot skip, however, is the lemon zest. It brightens the dish up and for me, is the best part. It's important to use a Microplaner (available at Linens 'N' Things or Greenery Market) because it allows you to only use the skin of the fruit, not the bitter, white pith.

SERVES 4

- 1 bunch fresh asparagus, washed with bottom ends trimmed
- 3-4 cloves fresh garlic
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- ³/₄ cup pine nuts
- 1 ¹/₂ cups extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese (omit if desired)
- Kosher salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh basil to garnish
- Whatever pasta you wish

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Add asparagus and blanch until just tender, about 3 minutes. Remove from water and place a bowl of ice water next to stovetop to stop cooking process and retain bright green color.
2. Cut tips off asparagus and set aside. Place garlic in food processor and process until finely chopped. Add stalks and pulse 3-4 times. Add pine nuts, parmesan, salt and pepper and blend until coarse paste forms. Add juice of lemon, zest and run processor, adding oil in thin stream until smooth. Season as needed, toss with pasta, garnish with basil and serve.

NOTE: Can be prepared up to 4 hours ahead and stored in refrigerator. Ours is served with sliced grapeseed tomatoes. *

Lorenzo's
ITALIAN RESTAURANT

Lorenzo's
ESTABLISHED 1993

Voted
Best Italian
Restaurant
10 Years
Running

Catering,
Private
Parties and
Take out
available

Voted Best
Caterer in
Las Cruces
for 2006

COME MEET OUR FAMILY

Lorenzo's Pan Am
1753 E. University Ave.
Open Daily for Lunch & Dinner
505-521-3505

Lorenzo's Café
741 N. Alameda Blvd.
Open M-F for Lunch
505-524-2850

Lorenzo's Avanti
3961 E. Lohman Ave.
Open Daily for Lunch & Dinner
505-522-7755

Pasta Café
Established 1993
Italian
Bistro

Cheers
TO GREAT FOOD, GREAT FRIENDS & GREAT FUN!

505-257-6666 • 2331 SUDDERTH RUIDOSO, NM
505-624-1111 • 1208 N. MAIN ST. ROSWELL, NM
pastacafeitalianbistro.com