



Gemelli with Asparagus, Ricotta, Arugula, and Lemon Zest

Servings	4 servings
Prep Time	0 hours, 10 minutes
Cook Time	0 hours, 20 minutes

Summary

This recipe is a great example of learning a technique that can then be applied to a variety of ingredients. If you can't find asparagus at the market, substitute what is fresh right now: summer squash, winter squash, broccoli, bell peppers, spinach, artichokes, etc. Learn from my mistakes, however, by melting the cheese with pasta water into a sauce before you add the vegetables back into the noodles to avoid clumping.

Ingredients

- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound asparagus, trimmed, peeled, and cut into 1-inch pieces
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 pound gemelli, fusilli, rotini or any other medium-thickness short pasta
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 1 Tablespoon lemon zest
- 2 cups loosely packed baby arugula leaves
- 2 ounces finely grated Pecorino Romano cheese, plus more for serving tableside

Instructions

1. Peel the asparagus, leaving only small strips of skin, and chop into 1-inch pieces. Heat oil in large heavy-bottomed sauce pot over high heat until just starting to smoke. (This pot should be big enough to hold all the pasta in the end.) Add asparagus pieces and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender-crisp and lightly browned. Season asparagus to taste with salt and pepper, transfer to bowl, and set aside. Do not clean sauce pot.
2. Bring 2 quarts of water and 1 teaspoon kosher salt to a boil over high heat. Add pasta and cook until proper al dente texture is reached. Pasta should be fully softened, but retain a slight bite in the center. Drain pasta, reserving 2 cups of cooking liquid. Immediately transfer pasta to empty sauce pot from cooking asparagus.
3. Add ricotta, lemon zest, grated cheese, and a few big twists of black pepper to the pasta. Add 1 cup pasta water and stir until all ingredients are combined. Continue adding pasta water until desired consistency is reached (the ricotta should turn into a creamy sauce that coats the noodles).
4. Stir in asparagus and arugula, and allow to cook over very low heat until vegetables are reheated, stirring regularly. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve immediately, passing more grated cheese at the table.

Sources

Serious Eats -
<http://www.serious-eats.com/recipes/2010/05/gemelli-with-asparagus-ricotta-arugula-and-lemon-zest-recipe.html>

Related Recipes

More pasta-water experiments (or, what not to do with pasta water) -
http://www.localdish.net/posts/more_pastawater_experiments_or_what_not_to_do_with_pasta_water