

Roasted Asparagus Bundles

Ingredients
(Serves 4)

For the seasoned bread crumbs:

1-1/2 tsp extra virgin olive oil or garlic oil
1 tsp minced garlic
1/4 cup fine dried bread crumbs
Pinch gray salt
Freshly ground pepper
1 tbsp finely chopped fresh parsley
1 tsp freshly grated lemon zest
1 tbsp freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Unsalted butter for baking dish
1 large bunch asparagus, about 1 pound, trimmed to even lengths and cooked for 4 minutes in boiling, salted water
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
Gray salt and freshly ground pepper
8 thin slices prosciutto

Directions:

To make the seasoned breadcrumbs, heat the olive oil in a small skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add the garlic and sauté briefly until pale gold.

Add the breadcrumbs, season with salt and pepper, and lower the heat to medium. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the breadcrumbs are toasted, about 3 minutes.

Pour into a small bowl and add the parsley, lemon zest, and Parmesan. Toss well. (The crumbs keep, tightly sealed and refrigerated, for several days.)

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Butter a shallow baking dish that is long enough to hold the asparagus. Toss the cooled asparagus with the olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Divide the asparagus into 4 equal bundles. Arrange 2 slices of the prosciutto on a work surface so they slightly overlap each other. Place an asparagus bundle on top and roll up carefully in the prosciutto.

Arrange in the prepared baking dish. Flatten the top of each bundle slightly and sprinkle with one-fourth of the seasoned breadcrumbs.

Roast in the oven until heated through and crisp, about 10 minutes. Serve at once.

A microplane grater works beautifully for both the lemon zest and the Parmesan cheese.