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Recipes



Cook's Country Parmesan-Crusted Asparagus

Crisp-tender asparagus on the inside, crunchy and cheesy on the outside.



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Ingredients

2 pounds	asparagus, trimmed (1/2-inch-thick)
	Salt and pepper
3 ounces	Parmesan cheese, grated (1-1/2 cups)
3/4 cup	panko breadcrumbs
1 tablespoon	unsalted butter, melted and cooled
	Pinch cayenne
2 large	egg whites
1 teaspoon	honey

Cooking Instructions

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: Simply roasting asparagus and topping it with shaved Parmesan gives you limp spears and rubbery cheese. To get crisp-tender asparagus, we salted it to rid it of excess moisture. From there, we dipped the spears in a combination of honey and egg whites whipped to soft peaks and coated them with a mixture of bread crumbs and Parmesan. Finally, to reinforce the Parmesan flavor, we topped the spears with an extra dose of cheese at the end of roasting. Avoid pencil-thin asparagus for this recipe. Work quickly when tossing the asparagus with the egg whites, as the salt will rapidly begin to deflate the whites.

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and spray with vegetable oil spray. Using fork, poke holes up and down stalks of asparagus. Toss asparagus with 1/2-teaspoon salt and let stand for 30 minutes on a paper towel-lined baking sheet.
2. Meanwhile, combine 1-cup Parmesan, breadcrumbs, butter, 1/4-teaspoon salt, 1/8-teaspoon pepper, and cayenne in bowl. Transfer half of breadcrumb mixture to shallow dish and reserve remaining mixture. Using stand mixer fitted with whisk, whip egg whites and honey on medium-low speed until foamy, about 1 minute. Increase speed to medium-high and whip until soft peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes. Scrape into 13 by 9-inch baking dish and toss asparagus in mixture. Working 1 spear at a time, dredge half of asparagus in breadcrumbs and transfer to baking sheet. Refill shallow dish with reserved breadcrumb mixture and repeat with remaining half of asparagus.
3. Bake asparagus until just beginning to brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup Parmesan and continue to bake until cheese is melted and bread crumbs are golden brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer to platter. Serves 4 to 6 as a side dish.

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