



May means asparagus... and what better way to serve Cheshire's finest spring crop with another local delicacy, Cheshire new potatoes? Roasting brings a whole new level of nutty deliciousness to asparagus... it works brilliantly on the BBQ too! If something a little more exotic appeals, then dive into this fabulous seasonal risotto, it really can't be beaten! Add some Parma ham for a real treat

ROAST ASPARAGUS WITH CHESHIRE NEW POTATOES AND POACHED EGG

Ingredients - Serves 1

1 bunch asparagus, woody ends removed
1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
25g/1oz butter
1 tbsp olive oil
150g/5½oz new potatoes, cooked, sliced
1 tbsp white wine vinegar
1 free-range egg
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4.
2. Toss the asparagus, olive oil, salt and freshly ground black pepper together in a bowl, then place onto a baking sheet and roast in the oven for ten minutes, or until the asparagus is tender.
3. For the new potatoes, melt the butter and oil in a frying pan, add the potatoes, season with salt and freshly ground black pepper and fry for 3-4 minutes, or until golden-brown on all sides.
4. For the poached egg, fill a small pan with boiling water and add the vinegar. When the water is gently simmering, swirl the water to make a whirlpool, crack the egg into the centre of the whirlpool and leave to cook for 3-4 minutes, or until the white has just set. Remove with a slotted spoon.

ASPARAGUS RISOTTO

Ingredients - Serves 2

1 tbsp olive oil
1 shallot, chopped
1 garlic clove, chopped
200g/7oz risotto rice (eg carnaroli or arborio)
250ml/9fl oz white wine
500ml/18fl oz hot vegetable stock
4 asparagus spears, blanched, chopped
25g/1oz unsalted butter
75g/2¾oz parmesan, grated
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method

1. Heat the oil in a frying pan and gently fry the shallot and garlic until softened but not coloured.
2. Add the rice and fry for one minute, stirring frequently, until coated in the oil.
3. Add the wine and simmer gently until absorbed by the rice.
4. Add the hot vegetable stock a small amount at a time, stirring between each addition to allow the liquid to be completely absorbed, until the rice is cooked and all the stock has been absorbed. Constant stirring will encourage a creamy texture.
5. Add the asparagus, butter and parmesan, season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper and stir well.