



### Roasted Asparagus with Tarragon Butter Sauce

*Although asparagus is available year-round, it is a traditional side dish for any spring feast (and best when freshly picked from the farm). The rich essence of freshly minced tarragon adds a lovely flavor to the velvety butter sauce, making it a perfectly luxurious way to dress up freshly roasted asparagus. The extra sauce will not go to waste either: It can complement your favorite grilled or pan-sautéed meats.*

4 servings

### Ingredients

1 pound fresh asparagus  
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
salt and pepper, to taste  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
2 tablespoons flour  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup whole milk  
2 teaspoons white wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons fresh tarragon, minced  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon zest

### Equipment

Sheet pan  
Small saucepan  
Whisk

### Preparation

#### *Prepare the asparagus:*

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Rinse and dry the asparagus. Trim off the tough ends by holding one asparagus stalk at both ends and bending. The asparagus will break where it becomes tender. Use this piece of asparagus as a guide to trim the remaining stalks with your knife.

Place the asparagus stalks on a sheet pan and drizzle with the extra virgin olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and blend well. Roast in the oven for about 15 to 20 minutes or to desired doneness. Set aside.

*[Chef's Note: Be sure all the stalks are in a single layer in the roasting pan so they roast evenly. If they all do not fit in the one pan, use two; a crowded pan will create steam and inhibit the asparagus from roasting properly].*

#### *Make the tarragon butter sauce:*

In a small saucepan, melt the butter. While whisking, add the flour to the melted butter, slowly incorporating it to prevent lumps. Keep whisking and cooking the roux for a minute or two until it is smooth and well blended. Slowly add the whole milk  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a cup at a time while whisking constantly. Keep whisking to prevent lumps from forming. Keep adding the milk until it reaches the desired consistency (coating the back of a spoon). Add the white wine vinegar and the minced tarragon. Cook the sauce for a few minutes longer, whisking as it cooks. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Spoon the sauce over the roasted asparagus spears and garnish with the lemon zest. Serve immediately.