

Chef from the Hood Recipes



Chef:

Charles Downing and Victor Perez

Restaurant:

Flavor Bistro

Recipe:

Asparagus

Ingredients

To make 4 grilled asparagus "rafts":

28 spears of fresh, Northern California asparagus

8 medium sized bamboo skewers

olive oil to brush on rafts of asparagus before grilling

For the herb salsa:

1/2 teaspoon finely minced fresh shallot

1/2 teaspoon finely minced fresh garlic

1 Tablespoon minced fresh tarragon

3 Tablespoons chiffonade (thinly sliced)

fresh basil leaf

2 Tablespoons fresh chopped chives

3 Tablespoons of diced fresh tomato

(small dice)

4 ounces (1/2 cup) local extra virgin olive

oil

1 Tablespoon Chardonnay vinegar

Kosher or sea salt & fresh ground pepper

(to taste)

Method: Submerge skewers in water to soak while you get everything prepped. Make the salsa by mixing together all of the salsa ingredients. Set salsa aside while you prep the asparagus. Snap off and discard the woody part from the bottom of each asparagus spear. Take a skewer and push it through the asparagus about 1/4 of the way up the spear. Place another skewer about 3 inches from the first skewer, so that you will have a spear of asparagus with 2 skewers through it at a 90° angle. Add more spears until you have made a flat raft of 7 asparagus spears in a row held together by two skewers. After you have made four rafts, brush each with olive oil. Grill each side of the asparagus rafts over medium hot coals or a gas grill flame until they are done to your liking. Just before serving the grilled asparagus, quickly warm the salsa in a small pot. DO NOT LET THE SALSA BOIL! Salsa should be just warmed through, yet ingredients will still be almost raw. Spoon over asparagus. Enjoy!

Locally grown, grilled asparagus topped with warm Shallot & Herb Salsa!

Asparagus is a wondrous thing. It's arrival, not far after the new year begins, is a welcome reminder that spring is on the way. When Chef Charles Downing told me how he makes this sublime yet simple dish, I recalled enjoying it at Spiedini, his Walnut Creek restaurant. I couldn't wait to recreate this dish myself. Another local chef once told me that fresh ingredients, a sharp knife and a fire are the essential ingredients of good cooking. Word! Serves 4 as a 1st course.