

Burwash Manor Asparagus with Mozzarella and Parma Ham

Burwash Manor Asparagus are among the best in the country. The season starts in late April and is usually over by mid June.

Asparagus are delicious steamed and served with melted butter and a little sea salt and black pepper. They are superb grilled and drizzled with extra-virgin olive oil, freshly grated Parmesan and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice. Or try dipping steamed spears in softly boiled egg.

Thinly shaved raw asparagus is a bit of a taste revelation when used in salads, lending crunch and a taste very similar to freshly podded green peas.

This recipe is so simple that top quality ingredients are essential. Creamy, slightly tangy cheese, salty ham and warm, sweet asparagus creates a very satisfying and indulgent salad.

1. Break the stems of the asparagus where they will naturally snap.
2. Bring a pan of water to the boil and immerse the asparagus very carefully, making sure the tips face up if at all possible.
3. Gently simmer for 3 minutes until the asparagus are "al dente" and absolutely not soggy. Drain and toss with the butter and sea salt.
4. While the asparagus steams, arrange slices of the ham on a large platter and scatter pieces of Mozzarella over it. Dress with generous amounts of olive oil and some freshly ground black pepper.
5. Arrange the warm, buttery asparagus in a pile in the centre.

INGREDIENTS

500g/1 lb Burwash Manor asparagus

30g of butter

Maldon Sea salt

12 slices of top quality Parma Ham

2 large, fresh Buffalo Mozzarellas roughly torn

Extra-virgin olive a green, peppery variety works best

Freshly ground black pepper