

Asparagus Royale

Serves 10 using the All-Clad Round Cake Pan

A royale is a classic French custard, and in this recipe it showcases fresh asparagus and creamy goat cheese. There are a few steps to this recipe, but the results are likely to be unlike anything you have made. Using a blender aerates the eggs and heating them, thickens it enough to keep the asparagus suspended in the royale. Although the base of the royale is eggs, the finished dish does not resemble a frittata. It is significantly creamier and lighter in flavor and texture. Serve as a first course, a light lunch or for brunch.



Ingredients:

- 3 bunches (about 1 pound each) medium asparagus
- Canola oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 16 large eggs

- 1 1/2 cups half and half
- 7 tablespoons (3 1/2 ounces) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons fresh tarragon leaves or 1/4 cup fresh chervil leaves
- 2 1/2 ounces goat cheese, cut into small pieces

Instructions:

Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 275°F.

Break off and discard any tough ends of the asparagus stalks. Cut the bottoms to straighten, then, peel the asparagus stalks to within 1/2 inch of the tips. Cut off the tips and set aside. Cut the remaining stalks into 1/4-inch thick rounds.

Heat a coating of canola oil in a large fry pan over medium high heat. Add the stems and season with salt and pepper. Sauté until just tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Drain the asparagus on paper towels.

Place the eggs in a blender and blend on low speed to combine. Add the half and half, 6 tablespoons of butter, 2 1/2 tablespoons of salt and 1/2 teaspoon of pepper. Increase the speed and blend for 30 seconds. Pour the custard into a medium saucepan and place over medium heat. Whisk constantly until the mixture is warm (100°F) and frothy. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in three-quarters of the tarragon or chervil.

Set the round cake pan on a deep baking sheet. Pour in the egg mixture and sprinkle with half the asparagus stalks and half the cheese. Mix the remaining cheese and asparagus stalks together and set aside. Pour 1/2-inch of the hottest tap water into the baking sheet. Place in the oven to cook for 30 minutes. Evenly space small spoonfuls of the asparagus and cheese mixture over the custard and continue to bake another 30 minutes. Insert the tip of a paring knife into the custard. When removed, there should not be any liquid clinging to the knife. Continue to cook as necessary, then remove from the oven.

While the royale rests, cook the asparagus tips. Heat a coating of canola oil in a large fry pan over high heat. Add the asparagus tips and a sprinkling of salt. Toss as they cook for about 2 minutes, then add 1/4 cup water and continue to cook, stirring often until the tips are slightly browned, just tender and the water has evaporated. Add another 1/4 cup water, the remaining herbs, and 1 tablespoon of butter, and toss to combine.

Serve the royale garnished with the asparagus tips.