

ASPARAGUS STRUDEL (The Silver Palate)

Serves about 8

Ingredients

$\frac{3}{4}$ lb asparagus (about 340 g), trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
2 medium leeks (white parts only), thinly sliced
1 tablespoon finely chopped shallot
1 cup plus 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and divided
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sliced almonds
 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb Gruyère cheese, grated (about 225 g)
3 eggs, beaten
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh dill
2 tablespoons snipped fresh chives
1 teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon paprika
Dash of cayenne pepper
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
12 sheets phyllo pastry, thawed if frozen

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Blanch the asparagus in boiling water for 3 minutes, drain, and pat dry. Transfer to a large bowl.

In a skillet, sauté the leeks and shallot in 4 tablespoons of melted butter until soft and translucent. Add them to the asparagus. Toast the almonds in the oven for about 8 minutes, until golden, and add them to the bowl along with the grated Gruyère, beaten eggs, mint, parsley, dill, chives, salt, pepper, paprika, cayenne, and lemon juice. Mix gently to combine.

Butter a large baking sheet. On a clean surface, lay out one sheet of phyllo and brush lightly with melted butter. Keep the remaining phyllo covered with a damp towel. Layer and butter six sheets in total. Spoon half of the asparagus mixture along one short edge and roll up jelly-roll style, tucking in the ends. Place on the baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining phyllo and filling to form a second roll. Brush the tops generously with butter.

Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, or until the pastry is crisp and golden brown. Let cool slightly before slicing into thick pieces. Serve warm.