

Recipe

Asparagus Salad with Ham & 7 Minute Eggs (& Dijon Dressing)

Ingredients

1 bunch of fresh asparagus

4 or 5 large eggs

12 oz pre-cooked ham steak

For the pickled mustard seeds:

1 Tbl. mustard seeds

1 cup water

1 Tbl. red wine vinegar

1 tsp. kosher salt

2 tsp. vegetable oil

for the Dijon dressing:

1/4 cup mayonnaise

1 Tbl. Dijon mustard

1 Tbl. vegetable oil

2 tsp. red wine vinegar

1/4 tsp. paprika

1/4 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. ground black pepper

1 Tbl. fine chopped fresh tarragon leaves



Directions

- In a large saucepan bring 2 quarts of water and a pinch of salt to a boil.
- While the water is heating, add 1 tray or 3 cups of ice cubes and 3 cups of cold water to a large mixing bowl.
- clean and trim the asparagus (A good way to know how much of the end to take off of the asparagus is to bend the spear and break the end off. Where it naturally tends to break is best. Test this with one piece and then cut the rest of the bunch accordingly.)
- When the water comes to a boil add the asparagus to the water trying to keep the spears alined with all of the tips facing one direction.
- continue boiling the asparagus for exactly 1 minute if they are thin and 1 & 1/2 minutes if they are larger than your finger typically.
- Immediately transfer the asparagus with from the boiling water to the ice water with tongs (Again keeping the spears aligned with the tips facing one direction and the bottoms in the opposite direction.)
- When the asparagus has cooled, shake of and excess water and transfer them to a serving dish and arrange them in a row with the tips facing in once direction.
- Place the serving piece with the asparagus in the refrigerator.
- Next cut the ham into 1 cm. cubes and arrange them on top of the asparagus in a decorative fashion. Cover the asparagus and ham and hold in the refrigerator until serving.



- To make the Pickled Mustard Seeds:
- Place 1 Tbl. mustard seeds, 1 cup water, 1 Tbl. red wine vinegar and 1 tsp. kosher salt in a small sauce pan.
- Bring the water to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a simmer and and continue cooking for 7 minutes.
- Strain the seeds through a fine mesh strainer and discard the water.
- In a small mixing bowl toss the mustard seed with the vegetable oil and store in the refrigerator until needed.

- To make the Dijon Dressing:
- In a small mixing bowl combine the mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, vegetable oil, 2 tsp. red wine vinegar, paprika, ground pepper, salt, and fine chopped tarragon.
- Mix well with a wire whisk until well blended.
- Set aside covered in the refrigerator until needed.

- For the 7 Minute Eggs:
- Bring 2 qts. water to a boil in a medium saucepan.
- While the water is heating, add 1 tray or 3 cups ice cubes and 3 cups cold water to a medium mixing bowl.
- Use a sewing pin or a thumb tack to gently poke a small hole in the smaller end of each egg. Set them aside in a small bowl.
- Once the water has come to a rapid boil, drop the eggs in gently one at a time but quickly and set a timer for “7 Minutes”.
- When they have cooked for exactly 7 minutes, carefully but quickly transfer them to the ice bath with a slotted spoon.



- Allow the eggs to cool in the ice bath for 10 minutes.
- Next peel the eggs and slice them in half from top to bottom and rest them yolk side up on a plate so as not to let the yolk run out.

- To assemble the Salad:
- Uncover the asparagus and ham.
- Drizzle the asparagus and ham with the Dijon dressing.
- Arrange the egg halves in a decorative fashion atop the asparagus spears and around the plate.
- Garnish the dish with the pickled mustard seed and some fresh dill and/or parsley if desired. A little dusting of fresh ground black pepper is also nice.

Chef's Notes

This is wonderful side dish for any spring meal, and can be made vegetarian without the ham. The 7 Minute egg is a fun technique. The purpose in poking a hole in each egg is to allow the natural sulfur in the eggs to escape while cooking. This method keeps the bright yellowish orange color of the yolk intact, and also aids in an easy-peel egg. The exact timing of 7 minutes and the ice bath technique obviously refers to the name, but also makes for a perfectly soft-cooked texture, which makes it just right for this dish. The yolks are not runny but also not too hard. If you prefer a slightly more cooked yolk, add one more minute to the cook-time. This method is often used when making soft cooked eggs for ramen bowls.

