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Asparagus Wrapped in Pancetta with Citronette

This dish is from Mario Batali's cookbook "Italian Grill." He shared it exclusively with Martha Stewart Living Radio (Sirius channel 112).

INGREDIENTS

Serves 6.

2 pounds large asparagus, 12 to 18 stalks per pound

4 ounces thinly sliced pancetta

Grated zest and juice of 1 orange

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 1/2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh thyme

Coarse sea salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Snap the tough bottom stalks off the asparagus. Unroll the slices of pancetta and lay them out on a work surface. Lay an asparagus spear on a slight diagonal across the bottom of one slice and roll it up, covering as much of the stalk as possible but leaving the tip visible (if you are using jumbo asparagus, you may have a few slices of pancetta left over for another dish). Place on a tray or small baking sheet and repeat with the remaining asparagus. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour (this rest will help the pancetta adhere to the asparagus).
2. Preheat a gas grill or prepare a fire in a charcoal grill.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the orange zest, juice, and mustard. Continuing to whisk, slowly drizzle in the olive oil until emulsified and smooth. Season with salt and pepper, and set aside.
4. Place the asparagus on the grill and cook, turning occasionally, until it is just tender and the pancetta is crisped, about 4 to 6 minutes. If the pancetta browns too much before the asparagus is cooked, move the spears to a cooler part of the grill.
5. Whisk the citronette again, and pour half of it onto a serving platter. Sprinkle with half of the chopped thyme and pile the asparagus on top. Drizzle with the remaining citronette and sprinkle with the remaining thyme. Serve with a small bowl of coarse sea salt for dipping.

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