Roasted Balsamic Garlic Asparagus Appetizer

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Internet Address: http://www.food.com/recipe/roasted-balsamic-garlic-asparagus-appetizer-114923



Servings: 6

1 pound asparagus, medium to thick stems (not too thin)
olive oil or olive oil spray or mister
1/4 teaspoon sea salt, to taste
1/8 teaspoon fresh ground pepper, to taste (I like tricolor peppercorns)
1 teaspoon butter, not margarine
1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
2 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced lengthwise into 3 pieces (amount of garlic to taste)
1/2 tablespoon soy sauce
1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar

Cook Time:

1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Trim the asparagus, then rinse, and cut about an inch off the ends, then use a vegetable peeler to take the outer layer off another inch of the remaining fibrous ends.
3. Place the trimmed asparagus in a single layer on a non-stick baking sheet, then spray with an olive oil mister or drizzle evenly with olive oil.
4. Season with the sea salt and the freshly ground pepper.
5. Bake for 8 minutes (don't overcook). If the asparagus is thinner or thicker it may take less or more time, so adjust the baking time accordingly.
6. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan over very low heat melt the butter and extra virgin olive oil.
7. Add the sliced garlic and simmer (again, over very low heat) for 5 minutes - careful not to burn. Remove from heat and add the soy sauce and balsamic. The garlic will absorb color from the liquids, so don't be alarmed that the garlic is burned - as long as it wasn't brown before you added it, you'll be fine!
8. When asparagus is done, remove from the oven and place in a flat container which has an airtight cover.
9. Drizzle the balsamic mixture on the asparagus and use your hands to mix the sauce over all the spears. Cover tightly, allow to come to room temp, then place in refrigerator to chill. Please note that, at first, the asparagus is still hot in the container, and that covering them and adding the sauce at this point will continue to steam them a bit for a few minutes. Serve with napkins as you'll be picking up the spears with your fingers.
10. Chill for at least 4 hours before serving, then place attractively on serving platter. Taste for seasoning and add more salt and pepper on top,

This could also be served as a side dish - but it would serve fewer people.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 24 Calories; 1g Fat (49.3% calories from fat); 1g Protein; 2g Carbohydrate; 1g Dietary Fiber; 2mg Cholesterol; 172mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 1/2 Vegetable; 0 Fruit; 1/2 Fat.

if desired.