

Roasted Asparagus with Hazelnut Sauce

1/3 cup hazelnuts

2 pounds asparagus

2 tablespoons olive oil

1/4 teaspoon salt

Fresh-ground black pepper

6 Tablespoons butter, cut into pieces

1/2 teaspoon lemon juice

Heat the oven to 350°. Put the hazelnuts on a large baking sheet and toast in the oven until the skins crack and loosen and the nuts are golden brown, about 15 minutes. Wrap the hot hazelnuts in a kitchen towel and firmly rub them together to remove most of the skins. Discard the skins. Let the nuts cool and then chop them.

Raise the heat to 450°. Snap off the tough ends of the asparagus and discard them. On the baking sheet, toss the asparagus with the oil, 1/4 teaspoon of the salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Spread the asparagus out on the baking sheet and roast until just tender, 5 to 7 minutes for thin spears, 8 to 10 minutes for medium, or 10 to 12 minutes for thick spears.

Meanwhile, in a small frying pan, melt the butter over low heat. Add the toasted hazelnuts. Cook, stirring until the butter is golden brown, about 5 minutes. Add the lemon juice and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Pour the sauce over the roasted asparagus.

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