

ASPARAGUS AND HAM TARTS

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| 10 burrito-style flour tortillas (10 inch/25 cm) | 1 round (250 g) brie cheese |
| Oil | 4 eggs |
| 1 cup (250 mL) thinly sliced asparagus | 1/4 cup (50 mL) light sour cream |
| 1/3 cup (75 mL) finely chopped cooked ham | Dash hot pepper sauce |



Cut four 2 1/2 inch (6.25 cm) squares out of each tortilla. Lightly brush one side of each square with oil. Press each square, oiled side down, into a greased mini muffin cup to make a ruffled tart shell. Combine asparagus and ham; spoon mixture into tart shells. Cut brie into 40 cubes, each about 3/8 inch (1 cm). Place 1 cube in each tart shell. Whisk together eggs, sour cream and hot pepper sauce until blended. Spoon about 1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) of egg mixture into each tart shell. Bake at 350°F (180°C) for 20 minutes or until set. Serve warm. May be frozen. Makes 40.

Cook's Note: To make brie easier to cut, first place it in the freezer for 30 minutes.

ASPARAGUS MIMOSA

This attractive salad gets its name from the yellow mimosa flower.

In this recipe, mimosa refers to the sieved egg yolk garnish.

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| 24 asparagus spears, trimmed | 1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt |
| 2 tbsp (25 mL) white wine vinegar | 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) freshly ground pepper |
| 1 tbsp (15 mL) finely chopped green onion | 1/3 cup (75 mL) olive oil |
| 1 tsp (5 mL) Dijon mustard | 2 hard-cooked eggs, peeled and halved |

Cook asparagus in boiling salted water just until tender, about 6 - 8 minutes; drain. Cool immediately in ice water; drain. To prepare vinaigrette, whisk together vinegar, green onion, mustard, salt and pepper until combined. Gradually whisk in oil until blended; set aside. Remove yolks from eggs. Force yolks through a sieve using the back of a spoon. Finely chop egg whites. Toss asparagus with 2 tbsp (25 mL) vinaigrette. Arrange asparagus on a serving plate. Sprinkle egg whites across centre of asparagus. Sprinkle yolks over egg whites. Drizzle remaining vinaigrette over top. Serves 6.

ASPARAGUS WITH ALMONDS

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| 1/2 cup (125 mL) slivered almonds | 1/2 cup (125 mL) chopped onion |
| 1 tbsp (15 mL) butter | Freshly ground pepper |
| 1 tbsp (15 mL) oil | 2 tbsp (25 mL) dry white wine or chicken stock |
| 4 cups (1 L) diagonally sliced asparagus | |

In a frypan, sauté almonds in butter until lightly browned; remove almonds and set aside. Add oil and sauté asparagus and onion. Season to taste with pepper and cook 3 - 5 minutes. Add wine and cook, covered, for 2 minutes. Transfer to serving dish and sprinkle with almonds. Serves 4 - 6.

ASPARAGUS WITH ORANGE BUTTER

24 asparagus spears, trimmed
1/4 cup (50 mL) butter, melted

1 tsp (5 mL) grated orange peel
1/4 tsp (1 mL) rosemary, crumbled

In a large frypan, bring 1 inch (2.5 cm) water to a boil. Add asparagus and simmer just until tender, about 3 minutes; drain. Combine butter, orange peel and rosemary. Pour over asparagus and toss to coat.
Serves 4 - 6.

Cook's Note: *For a special spring flavour, use grated peel from a blood orange.*