

SCOTT'S

RICHMOND

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

APRIL



ENGLISH ASPARAGUS

with Portland crab hollandaise, cucumber and fennel

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- 16x spears of English green asparagus
- 1x 1.5-2kg cock crab (or 120g white crab meat and 200g brown crab meat)
- ½ bulb fennel, finely shaved
- ½ cucumber, peeled into ribbons
- 1 Lemon
- Olive oil

For the brown crab puree:

- 1 x shallot finely sliced
- ½ x red chilli, de-seeded and finely sliced
- 1 x clove of garlic, minced
- ½ thumb size piece of ginger, peeled and minced
- 1 tsp tomato paste
- brown crab meat
- Olive oil

For the Hollandaise sauce:

- 40ml white wine vinegar
- 40ml water
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 2 sprigs tarragon
- 1 bay leaf
- 5 peppercorns
- 200g unsalted butter
- 3 medium free range egg yolks
- Salt and ground white pepper

ENGLISH ASPARAGUS

with Portland crab hollandaise, cucumber and fennel

This elegant dish celebrates the English asparagus season, perfect for lunch or as a starter. While asparagus shines on its own, adding fresh Portland crab brings a touch of luxury. You can buy pre-picked crab meat, but there's something deeply satisfying about picking it yourself.

Method

- If cooking the crab yourself, simmer it in a well-seasoned court bouillon for 16–20 minutes, depending on its size. Once done, remove it from the pot and let it cool until it's easy to handle.
- Remove the legs and claws, then gently crack them using a rolling pin or the back of a heavy knife. Extract the white meat, taking care to remove any small shell fragments. The meat can be refrigerated for later use.
- Detach the body from the shell to reveal the rich brown meat. Use a spoon to scrape it out into a separate bowl
- To prepare the brown crab purée, gently sauté the vegetables in olive oil until soft. Stir in the tomato paste, then add the brown crab meat and let it simmer over low heat for 10–15 minutes until it thickens. Blend until smooth and set aside.
- To prepare the Hollandaise, combine the vinegar, water, shallot, herbs, and pepper corns in a saucepan. Reduce the mixture by two-thirds, then strain and set aside to cool.
- Gently heat the butter in a heavy-bottomed pan until it separates. Skim off the white solids from the surface, then strain the clarified butter and keep it at room temperature.
- Place the egg yolks in a small bowl with half of the vinegar reduction, then whisk over a pan of gently simmering water until the mixture thickens and doubles in volume.
- Slowly pour in the butter while whisking continuously until you achieve a thick, glossy sauce. Whisk in a tablespoon of the brown crab purée, adding more if desired. Any leftover purée can be frozen for future use.
- For the asparagus, trim the tough ends of the stems and blanch them in salted boiling water for 2–4 minutes, depending on their thickness. Remove from the water and drain.
- To serve, arrange the asparagus evenly across four plates. Spoon the brown crab hollandaise over the top, then add the picked white crab meat. Finish with shaved fennel and cucumber, lightly dressed with olive oil, lemon juice, and a pinch of salt.