

Creamy Asparagus Pasta With Peas and Mint

By Melissa Clark

3-4 Servings - Prep time 30 minutes, total time 45 minutes

Sautéing asparagus in butter mellows it, bringing out its sweetness. Mixed with peas, mint, Parmesan and cream, it makes the foundation of a rich pasta dish with primavera vibes, but easier, faster and brighter, thanks to some grated lemon zest folded in at the end. If you can't get good asparagus, feel free to substitute other quick cooking vegetables, like zucchini, corn or mushrooms. This delightful cream sauce is highly adaptable.

Ingredients

1	pound short pasta, such as campanelle
1	pound asparagus (about 1 bunch), trimmed

2	tablespoons butter
	Sliced asparagus
3/4	cup frozen green peas (no need to thaw)
4	scallions, white and green parts thinly sliced
1/4	teaspoon red-pepper flakes
2	garlic cloves, finely chopped
1/2	teaspoon fine sea or table salt, more as needed
1/4	teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

3/4	cup heavy cream
1/4	teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3/4	cup grated Parmesan (divided), more for serving

1	lemon, zested and halved
1/2	cup chopped fresh mint (or use parsley, basil or dill), for serving
	Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling

1 x 1/2 inch piece

RG notes:

- One suggestion was to cut asparagus into longer pieces (originally 1/4 inch)
- I normally use salted butter, so I halved the amount of salt in the recipe
- I like more vegetables and sauce, so I used 4.4 ounces of pasta and half the asparagus. For the first meal I cooked 2.2 ounces of pasta and mixed that with half of the vegetables and sauce.

Directions

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook pasta until al dente according to package directions.
2. As the pasta boils, slice asparagus stems into 1/2-inch pieces; leave asparagus tips whole.
3. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add asparagus, peas, scallions and red-pepper flakes. Cook until vegetables are bright green and just tender (but not soft or mushy), 2 to 4 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook 1 minute more. Season with the salt and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper; pour mixture into a large serving bowl.
4. To the same skillet, add the heavy cream, 1/2 cup grated Parmesan and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Simmer until reduced and thick, about 2 to 3 minutes. Return vegetables to the skillet and toss with the sauce to reheat.
5. When the pasta is done, reserve 1/2 cup pasta water, then drain well.
6. Immediately put the hot pasta in the same bowl you used for the vegetables and toss with remaining 1/4 cup grated Parmesan, lemon zest and mint. Add vegetable-cream mixture and the juice of half a lemon, and toss well.
7. If the mixture looks thick, add a little pasta water to loosen it; it should be saucy. Taste and season generously with salt, pepper and more lemon juice as needed; it should taste bright and lively. Serve, topping each bowl with more Parmesan, mint and a drizzle of olive oil.

