

# Salt and Serenity

## Roasted Asparagus with Pistachio Dukkah

I learned this excellent method for roasting asparagus from the March 2016 issue of Cook's Illustrated. The Dukkah recipe is adapted from a recipe on epicurious.com.

The recipe makes more dukkah than you will need. The leftover keeps well in an airtight container on the counter for a few weeks. It is fantastic sprinkled on grilled chicken or lamb chops. I also love to serve it as a snack to serve with drinks. Toasted pita wedges are great dipped into extra-virgin olive oil and then into a bowl of dukkah.

Serves 4

1 ½ pounds thick asparagus (at least ½ inch in diameter)  
1 ½ tablespoons olive oil  
½ teaspoon kosher salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
¾ cup shelled pistachios  
3 tablespoons sesame seeds  
1 tablespoon coriander seeds  
1 teaspoon cumin seeds  
½ teaspoon fennel seeds  
½ teaspoon kosher salt  
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
Zest of 1 lemon

Adjust oven rack to lowest position, place rimmed baking sheet on rack, and heat oven to 500°F. Trim bottom inch of asparagus spears and discard. Peel bottom 2 inches of spears until white flesh is exposed. Place asparagus in large mixing bowl and toss with 2 tablespoons oil, salt, and pepper.

Transfer asparagus to preheated baking sheet and spread into even layer. Roast, without moving asparagus, until undersides of spears are browned, tops are vibrant green, and tip of paring knife inserted at base of largest spear meets little resistance, 8 to 10 minutes. Arrange asparagus on serving platter and set aside while you prepare dukkah.

Preheat oven to 325°F. Spread pistachios on a rimmed baking sheet. Toast, tossing once, until fragrant and lightly golden, 8–10 minutes. Let cool completely.

Place sesame seeds into a medium skillet. Toast over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until fragrant and lightly golden, about 5 minutes. Add coriander, cumin, and fennel seeds and toast, stirring frequently, until sesame seeds are golden and spices are fragrant, about 2 minutes more. Transfer to a plate and let cool completely.

Coarsely chop  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup pistachios with a knife and set aside.

Pulse remaining pistachios ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup), sesame seed mixture, salt and pepper in a food processor until coarse, dry, and crumbly; do not let it become a paste. It will take about 12-15 pulses.

Sprinkle about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of dukkah on asparagus. Top with lemon zest and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped pistachios. This dish is excellent for entertaining as it can be served at room temperature.