

# Salt and Serenity

## Asparagus with Pistachio Pesto

Serves 4 as a side dish

60 grams (½ cup) shelled pistachios, toasted, and cooled  
30 grams (1 cup) spinach leaves (helps to keep the pesto from going brown)  
80 grams (about 4 cups) basil  
2 cloves garlic, finely grated with microplane grater  
½ teaspoon honey  
½ teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt  
¼ teaspoon black pepper  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
50 grams (½ cup) grated Parmesan cheese  
100 grams (½ cup) extra virgin olive oil  
900 grams asparagus (about 24 spears), I prefer thicker spears  
¼ cup toasted pistachios, coarsely chopped, for garnish  
2 hard boiled eggs, optional

1. Bring small pot of water to a boil. Add spinach leaves and boil for 30 seconds. Drain and rinse under cold water. Squeeze all the moisture out of the spinach.
2. Place pistachios, spinach, basil, garlic, honey, salt, pepper, lemon juice and Parmesan cheese into bowl of food processor. Pulse machine 10-15 times, until everything is finely chopped.
3. With the machine running, slowly drizzle the olive oil into machine. Scrape down sides of bowl and process for an additional 10 seconds, until smooth. Taste and add additional salt or lemon to your liking.
4. Bring a wide large pot of water to a boil. Get a large bowl of ice water ready to shock your asparagus and stop the cooking process.
5. Chop off the very ends of the asparagus stalks the part that tends to be a bit dried out, with a sharp knife. I find that snapping the ends off, where it naturally wants to bend, wastes too much good asparagus. Lay each spear on its side and use a vegetable peeler to peel the skin on the lower third of each spear. It takes a few extra minutes, but I find that it cooks more evenly and looks prettier.
6. Add 1 tablespoon Diamond crystal Kosher salt to boiling water. Add asparagus and cook for 2-4 minutes, depending on how thick your spears are. You want to cook it until it is bright green and just beginning to get

tender. Drain and plunge into bowl of ice water. Once asparagus is cooled, wrap in a kitchen towel to dry off most of the water.

7. Arrange asparagus on large serving platter. Drizzle with about  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup pesto. Scatter toasted pistachios over asparagus. On the large holes of a box grater, grate the hard-boiled eggs over the asparagus, if using. Serve.

Extra pesto will keep in fridge for 3 days, or it can be frozen for several months. It's delicious with salmon, on pasta or as a spread for sandwiches.