

# HOME COOKING

*with Cathy*



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Fresh Ontario Asparagus is an amazing spring treat!

The month of May certainly brings forward some wonderful things to look forward to. The birds have started to sing, the days are getting longer, the bulbs are starting to appear. We are so fortunate in Ontario to have so many items in the early spring to look forward to in the garden and for the more adventuresome-in the forest.

A few of them include fiddleheads, sorrel, rhubarb and of course asparagus. Did you know that for centuries, asparagus was considered a luxury and praised for its distinctive flavour by such famous figures as Julius Caesar and Lois XIV.

No one is quite sure of its origin, although some believe it derived from a wild plant that grew thousands of years ago in sandy soil across northern Europe and Britain.

Today, I share with you two of my favourite recipes – a tasty seasonal asparagus dish and a salmon recipe which brings back fond memories for Jim and I.

We discovered it during a family holiday in Ireland when our boys were younger. It originates in a tiny picturesque fishing village on the west coast of Ireland named Kilkee. Maple syrup was added to reflect our Irish-Canadian roots.

I hope you enjoy!!!

## Asparagus with Lemon Vinaigrette

*This refreshing vinaigrette works equally well with green beans, baby carrots and wilted spinach after asparagus season is over. You can make the vinaigrette in advance, refrigerate and bring to room temperature before using.*

### Ingredients:

16-20 asparagus spears

### Lemon Vinaigrette

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (juice from 1 lemon)

½-1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 small clove garlic, finely minced

1-2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and freshly ground pepper

### Preparation

Cut or break tough ends from asparagus. Discard end pieces. Rinse asparagus well under running water to remove any grit or sand.

Tie asparagus bundles together with kitchen twine. Remove basket from steamer and place asparagus bundle upright in basket. Add ½-to 1 - inch water to steamer pot; bring to a boil and add basket containing asparagus. Cover and cook about 5 minutes until just tender. (do not overcook). Remove basket from pan and immediately cool asparagus under cold water; drain and pat dry.

To serve, pour vinaigrette over cooked asparagus; turn to coat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper if desired. Makes 4 servings. Note: If you do not have a steamer, quick cook asparagus in large shallow pan in ½ -inch water, covered, for 5 minutes.

## Irish Roasted Maple Glazed Salmon

*Salmon fillets marinated in Irish Whisky and Maple Syrup have a glazed look as well as a superb taste and texture. The Irish Whisky helps to add a slight peppery taste. Serve with asparagus and baby new potatoes.*

### Ingredients:

4 salmon fillets (5-6 oz. or 150-175 g each)

¼ cup maple syrup

¼ cup apple cider vinegar

¼ cup good Irish Whisky

2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme

1 ½ teaspoon grated lemon zest

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

ground pepper and salt to taste

### Preparation

Mix together in a bowl - vinegar, whisky, maple syrup, oil, thyme, lemon zest, salt and pepper. Add salmon fillets to bowl and marinate for 1 hour at room temperature, or 4-8 hours in refrigerator. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C). Remove salmon from marinade and place on rack over a roasting pan. Bake in preheated oven for 10-12 minutes, basting once every 3-6 minutes with the marinade or until golden and white juices are just beginning to appear. Serves 4