PRESS & DAKOTAN n FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2013

## Asparagus Gives Dish A Nice Taste Of Spring

BY SUSAN SELASKY © 2013 Detroit Free Press

Fresh lemons, olive oil and Dijon mustard. Together they are the perfect trio to brighten up any dish.

Add a little seasoning and enhance things even more.

In today's dish, the trio is paired with roasted chicken thighs and legs, asparagus and sweet mini bell peppers.

You can't go wrong with any asparagus dish this time of year. My local grocery store has huge displays of this harbinger of spring. Often on sale, it's not local, however. Michigan-grown asparagus is still weeks out. Most of the asparagus at my store is tagged from Mexico, and soon California asparagus will be in.

Asparagus is simple and easy to prepare — and that's what's so enjoyable about it. You can roast or steam it and grill or broil it. You can eat it hot or cold and even raw. Go ahead, pick up a spear with your fingers for a tasty snack.

Because asparagus goes with just about anything, I roasted it and mini bell peppers in today's dish. The mini bell peppers are a favorite because they, too, require little prep work. A 2-pound bag costs about \$5.

For this recipe, I roasted the asparagus and the sliced peppers together. The technique I like to use to roast these vegetables is to preheat a sided baking pan that's drizzled with olive oil before I put the asparagus and peppers in. Doing so gives them a quick little sear and sizzle and both are crisp tender in about 7 minutes.

When it came to the chicken, I decided on thighs for this dish because I picked them up at a good sale price. Chicken thighs have tons of flavor and are a nice change from lean boneless, skinless chicken breast. Yes, the thighs and legs have more fat, especially if you factor in the skin. But you can remove it to shave off some fat and calories.

The chicken thighs I bought were in a family pack that contained about 12 thighs.

Today's recipe rocks because you can put it together in the morning and let the chicken marinate all day. Pop it into the oven and get some asparagus and mini red peppers ready to roast while the chicken is roasting. This way, you can have dinner on the table in less than an hour.

## **ROASTED LEMON CHICKEN WITH ASPARAGUS AND PEPPERS**

Serves: 4 / Preparation time: 10 minutes / Total time: 1 hour You can use all chicken thigh or legs in this recipe.

move the baking sheet from the oven. Add the asparagus spears and pepper pieces to the pan; they will sizzle. Place in the oven for 7 minutes or until the just barely tender. Remove from oven and drizzle with the reserved olive oil/lemon mixture or simply season with salt and pepper.

Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen. Chicken only: 399 calories (72% from fat), 32 grams fat (6 grams sat. fat), 9 grams carbohydrates, 19 grams protein, 741 mg sodium, 69 mg cholesterol, 0



From and tested by Susan M.



PHOTOS: KATHLEEN GALLIGAN/DETROIT FREE PRESS/MCT Fresh lemons, olive oil and Dijon mustard are paired with chicken, asparagus and sweet mini bell peppers in this dish.





4 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs 4 chicken legs with skin 1/3 cup olive oil 1/4 cup lemon juice 1 teaspoon sea salt 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

## GLAZE

2 tablespoons olive oil 1 to 2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 tablespoons Dijon or favorite grainy mustard

2 tablespoons maple syrup or honey

Salt and pepper to taste Asparagus and Peppers (see note)

Pat the chicken thighs and legs dry. Remove any excess fat from the chicken thighs. In a glass measuring cup, mix together the olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Reserve a few tablespoons of this mixture for the asparagus. Place chicken pieces in a large bowl and drizzle the olive oil mixture over, tossing to coat. Refrigerate 2-8 hours.

In a small bowl, whisk together all the glaze ingredients. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place the chicken pieces in a roasting pan, skin-side down. Roast the chicken 25 minutes. Turn chicken skin side-up, brush pieces with some of the glaze and roast 10 more minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Remove from oven and place chicken on a platter; tent with foil.

Pour off as much fat as you can from the roasting pan and set the pan over two burners. Heat, scraping up any bits from the bottom of the pan. Stir in the remaining glaze and heat through. Pour sauce into a small bowl (there won't be a lot of it) and serve with the chicken.

Note: To make the asparagus and peppers: Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Rinse and trim tough ends from 1/2 pound asparagus. Slice 8 mini bell peppers into strips. Drizzle a sided baking sheet with 1 tablespoon olive oil and place in the preheated oven for about 5 minutes. Using oven mitts, carefully reUNCLAIMED FURNITURE

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