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Piccolini Penne Pasta with Pistachio Pesto and Spring Asparagus



Ingredients

- 1 pound piccolini penne pasta
- 1 bunch fresh basil leaves, stems removed
- 1/2 cup shelled pistachios
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4-5 ounces Parmesan cheese (split-half grated for garnish and half cut into small pieces for pesto)
- 2 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 pound skinny spring asparagus, thinly sliced

Piccolini Penne with Pistachio Pesto and Spring Asparagus. Photo Susie Iventosch

Directions

Place shelled pistachios in a food processor and process until finely chopped. Add garlic, basil and the Parmesan cut into small pieces and process again. Finally, add olive oil and pulse just until integrated. Set aside.

Cut asparagus into very thin (1/8-inch) slices. Set aside.

Cook pasta to al dente in large pot. Strain out water and return pasta to warm cooking pot. Add sliced asparagus and stir well. Cover for just about two minutes, to slightly warm asparagus. Then mix in all but 1/4 cup of the pesto and serve at once. Pass extra Parmesan at the table. Serve with toasted French bread, topped with extra pesto and tomato slices.

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