



Grilled Asparagus with Sauce Maitaise

Being one of the classic 'mother sauces' of French cuisine, Hollandaise (a warm emulsification of eggs, butter and lemon juice) is the foundation for many variations, including sauce Maitaise (Maltese sauce) in which some of the lemon juice is replaced by the juice of blood oranges. Why Maltese? I can only assume that Malta, like neighbouring Sicily, is famous for its blood oranges.

Serves 4 as a starter



INGREDIENTS

- 30 spears asparagus, trimmed
- Extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling
- Salt flakes, to taste

Sauce Maitaise

- 3 egg yolks
- 1½ tablespoons strained blood orange juice (30ml)
- ½ tablespoon strained lemon juice (30ml)
- 125g butter (4½oz)
- Salt flakes, to taste

METHOD

1. Toss asparagus with a generous drizzle of oil so they're well coated.
2. Cook on a ridged barbecue plate or char-grill pan for a few minutes, turning occasionally, until they have grill marks all over.
3. Meanwhile, make Sauce Maitaise: combine yolks and half the blood orange juice. Melt butter and, while it's still hot, pour it into the blender with the motor running, leaving behind the milky residue in the bottom of the pan. Blend in remaining blood orange juice, lemon juice and salt.
4. Transfer asparagus to a platter, sprinkle with salt and top with Sauce Maitaise.