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# Asparagus cannelloni and chorizo broccolini: Yotam Ottolenghi’s spring recipes

A riot of fresh spring flavours: asparagus rolled in fresh pasta and smothered in pesto and bechamel, and a knockout tapa of charred baby broccoli with manchego and creme fraiche



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**A**sparagus, I’m sorry. [A month or so ago](https://www.theguardian.com/food/2021/mar/20/yotam-ottolenghi-potato-salad-recipes-charred-tomato-orange-salsa-nepalese-tamarind), I suggested there were only so many more ways in which you could be seen in a new light, and then you arrive as a celebration of spring and I’m energised and excited all over again. Excited not just to eat you as you are – brushed with olive oil, chargrilled and sprinkled with lemon, salt and pepper – but also about the possibilities and the new adventures we can go on together. Is that apology abject enough for you? I hope today’s recipe does you and your spears justice, and I already can’t wait to see in spring with you again next year.

## ****Asparagus cannelloni with coriander pesto and yoghurt bechamel (pictured above)****

I’ve given this retro dish a bit of a makeover, using the tanginess of yoghurt and the freshness of coriander and lemon to make it light and bright. Feel free to make it your own by using up whichever herbs and nuts you have to hand in the pesto – parsley and roast almonds, for example, would also work a treat.

Prep **35 min**
Cook **1 hr 10 min**Serves **4**

**8 sheets fresh lasagne
450g asparagus** (ie, about 24 spears), trimmed

For the coriander pesto
**80g coriander**, leaves and stalks roughly chopped
**80g blanched hazelnuts**, toasted and roughly chopped
**4 tsp coriander seeds**, toasted
**1-2 lemons** – zest finely grated, to get 1 tbsp, and juiced, to get 1 tbsp
**1 large garlic clove**, peeled and crushed
**120ml olive oil
Salt and black pepper**

For the yoghurt bechamel
**300g Greek-style yoghurt
200ml whole milk
2 egg yolks
1 large garlic clove**, peeled and crushed
**1 tbsp cornflour
80g pecorino or parmesan**, finely grated
**70g firm (low-moisture) mozzarella**, roughly grated

First, make the pesto. Put the fresh coriander, hazelnuts, coriander seeds, lemon zest, garlic, 60ml oil, half a teaspoon of salt and a good grind of pepper in the bowl of a food processor, then pulse a few times to turn into a coarse paste.

Put all the bechamel ingredients in a large bowl with a half-teaspoon of salt and a generous grind of pepper, whisk until smooth, then pour half of it into a roughly 34cm x 24cm baking dish.

Heat the oven to 200C (180C fan)/390F/gas 6, and set aside a third of the pesto. Lay a sheet of lasagne on a clean work surface with the shorter side facing you. Spread a spoonful of the remaining pesto over the sheet of pasta, then lay three asparagus spears horizontally on top and all facing the same direction. Roll up the pasta into a cannelloni shape, with the asparagus sticking out slightly at each end. Carefully lift up the cannelloni and lay it seam side down in the baking dish on top of the bechamel. Repeat with the remaining pasta, pesto and asparagus, laying each rolled cannelloni in the baking dish so they’re all facing the same direction.

Pour the remaining bechamel over the top of the pasta, taking care not to cover any exposed green asparagus, then bake for 35 minutes, until golden and bubbling.

Just before serving, stir the remaining four tablespoons of oil and the lemon juice into the reserved pesto, spoon a generous amount over the cannelloni and serve warm with the remaining pesto in a bowl alongside.

## ****Broccolini with chorizo, manchego and caraway seed creme fraiche****



Yotam Ottolenghi’s purple sprouting broccoli with chorizo, manchego and caraway seed creme fraiche.

Double the recipe for the creme fraiche, if you like: it’s lovely to have in the fridge to serve with raw vegetables, and it keeps for up to three days. Use purple sprouting or any broccoli you have to hand, though you may need to adjust the cooking time accordingly.

Prep **10 min**
Cook **10 min**Serves **6**

**2 tbsp tomato paste
2 tbsp lemon juice
3 tbsp olive oil
Salt
200g cooking chorizo**, broken up into roughly 2cm pieces
**600g broccolini**
**40g manchego**, finely grated

For the caraway creme fraiche
**200g creme fraiche
1 tbsp caraway seeds**, toasted and lightly ground in a mortar
**2 tsp lemon juice**

Heat the oven to its highest setting – 250C (230C fan)/gas 9-plus. In a small bowl, mix the tomato paste with the lemon juice, olive oil and half a teaspoon of salt. Put the chorizo and broccoli in a large oven tray lined with baking paper, pour over the tomato mixture and toss to coat.

Roast for eight minutes, turning the broccoli once halfway, so the chorizo oil coats the stems. Take out of the oven, heat the grill to high, then grill the broccoli mix for two minutes, until lightly charred, remove and set aside.

In a small bowl, mix all the creme fraiche ingredients with a teaspoon of salt.

To serve, arrange the broccoli, chorizo and any oil from the tray on a platter. Drizzle over a few spoons of the creme fraiche, sprinkle half the manchego over the top and serve with the remaining creme fraiche and manchego on the side.