

# Creamy Asparagus Rigatoni

*with Romaine Salad & Lemon-Parmesan Dressing*

Asparagus, a classic springtime delicacy, makes for a delicious side, but it's also a wonderful addition to pasta dishes. Here, we're cutting asparagus into bite-sized pieces and sautéing it with garlic, then using it as the base of a zesty cheese sauce made with ricotta, Parmesan and lemon juice. We're finishing the cooked rigatoni in the sauce, which infuses it with asparagus' complex, earthy flavor.



## Ingredients

- 1 Pound Rigatoni Pasta
- ¾ Cup Part-Skim Ricotta Cheese
- 3 Cloves Garlic
- 2 Lemons
- 2 Ounces Spinach
- 1 Bunch Asparagus
- 1 English Cucumber
- 1 Head Romaine Lettuce

## Knick Knacks

- 1 Shallot
- ½ Cup Grated Parmesan Cheese

Makes 4 Servings  
About 625 Calories Per Serving  
Cooking Time: 25 to 35 minutes





1



### Prepare the ingredients:

Wash and dry the fresh produce. Heat a large pot of salted water to boiling on high. Snap off and discard the woody ends of the asparagus; cut the asparagus into 2-inch pieces. Peel and thinly slice the garlic. Cut off and discard the root end of the lettuce; separate the leaves. Thinly slice the cucumber into rounds. Quarter and deseed the lemons. Peel and mince the shallot to get 2 tablespoons of minced shallot (you may have extra shallot). In a medium bowl, combine the minced shallot and **the juice of 4 lemon wedges**; season with salt and pepper to taste.

2



### Make the dressing:

Add **half the Parmesan cheese** to the **shallot-lemon juice mixture**. Slowly whisk in **2 tablespoons of olive oil** until well combined; season with salt and pepper to taste. (If the dressing seems thick, slowly whisk in up to 1 tablespoon of water.) Set aside.

3



### Cook the pasta:

Add the **pasta** to the pot of boiling water. Cook 13 to 15 minutes, or until al dente (still slightly firm to the bite). Reserving **¾ cup of the pasta cooking water**, thoroughly drain the cooked pasta. Set the pasta aside in a warm place.

4



### Cook the asparagus:

In a large pan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil on medium-high until hot. Add the **garlic** and **asparagus**. Cook, stirring occasionally, 2 to 3 minutes, or until the garlic is fragrant and the asparagus is bright green.

5



### Finish the pasta:

To the pan of asparagus, add the **cooked pasta**, **spinach**, **ricotta cheese**, **remaining Parmesan cheese**, **the juice of the remaining lemon wedges** and **½ cup of the reserved pasta cooking water**. Cook, stirring occasionally, 2 to 3 minutes, or until the pasta is thoroughly coated and the liquid is slightly reduced in volume. (If the sauce seems dry, gradually add the remaining pasta cooking water to achieve your desired consistency.) Remove from heat. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a serving dish.

6



### Make the salad & serve your dish:

In a large bowl, combine the **lettuce**, **cucumber** and enough of the **dressing** to coat the salad (you may have extra dressing); toss to combine and season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a serving dish. Serve the **finished pasta** with the **salad** on the side. Enjoy!