

Seasonal Foods: Asparagus | March 2008 | CCM Staff

Vietnamese Crab & Asparagus Spring Rolls

Makes 24

½ lb asparagus, 3-inch long julienne*
 1 yellow bell pepper, 3-inch long julienne
 1 cucumber, peeled, seeded, 3-inch long julienne
 2 Tbsp chopped chives
 2 Tbsp chopped mint leaves
 2 Tbsp chopped cilantro leaves
 ¼ c mayonnaise
 fruit of 1 ripe papaya, chopped
 2 Tbsp minced yellow bell pepper
 ½ tsp Vietnamese garlic-chile sauce**
 finely grated zest of 1 lime
 8 ounces cooked Dungeness crab meat
 3 Tbsp chopped, salted peanuts
 salt and freshly ground pepper
 24 six-inch round rice paper wrappers**
 Spicy Mango Lime Dipping Sauce
 (recipe follows)

Blanch asparagus in salted, boiling water for 1 minute; then submerge immediately in a bowl of ice water. Drain and pat dry. In a small bowl, stir together asparagus, bell pepper, cucumber, and 1 tablespoon each of the chives, mint, and cilantro. Season with salt and pepper.

Combine mayonnaise, papaya, minced bell pepper, lime zest, garlic-chile sauce and the remaining chives, mint, and cilantro, and mix well. Stir in the crab and peanuts, and season with salt and pepper.

To make the spring rolls, fill a large bowl with warm water. Soak 1 rice paper round in water until softened (about 15 seconds). Remove round from water and smooth out on a clean work surface. Place 2 tablespoons of the vegetables in a small, rectangular bundle in the middle of the round. Top with 1 tablespoon of the crab mixture. Fold round over the long edge of the filling. Fold in sides, and continue rolling tightly, enclosing filling. Transfer to a cutting board and cover with a moist paper towel. Repeat with remaining rice paper rounds. (Can be made 8 hours ahead. Top with moist paper towel, cover with plastic wrap, and keep chilled.) Cut each roll on the bias and serve with Spicy Mango Lime Dipping Sauce.

Spicy Mango-Lime Dipping Sauce

Fruit of 1 ripe mango
 ½ Serrano chile pepper, seeds removed
 freshly squeezed juice of ½ lime

Purée the ingredients in a blender until smooth. Season with salt. Transfer to an air-tight container and refrigerate. Can be made ahead and stored for up to 2 days.

* If the tender young asparagus stalks are available, no need to julienne.

** Available at Asian markets, specialty foods stores, and some supermarkets.



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