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Asparagus Carbonara

SERVES 4

Making carbonara is a little bit like conducting an orchestra. One pot cooks, another fries the bacon, veggies here, herbs there, egg poached—then BAM! Dinner is ready.

Kosher salt

4 ounces slab or sliced bacon, cut into ¼-inch pieces

1 pound store-bought spaghetti or 1¼ pounds homemade

1 bunch asparagus, ends snapped off, sliced into 1-inch lengths

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus additional for sprinkling

4 large eggs

¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh tarragon or parsley

Freshly ground pepper

1 Set a large pot of salted water over high heat. Simultaneously heat your largest skillet or frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the bacon to the skillet and fry, stirring often, until it's crispy, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and use a slotted spoon to transfer the bacon to a small bowl. Leave the bacon fat in the pan and set aside.

2 When the water boils, add the pasta and cook until tender, 7 to 10 minutes for dried or 2 minutes for fresh. If using dried pasta, add the asparagus when the pasta is about halfway done. If using fresh pasta, you can start the pasta and asparagus together. Pour a few cups of the pasta water into a smaller pot set over medium-low heat (you'll use this to poach the eggs), then drain the pasta and asparagus in a colander and rinse in cold water.

3 Return the reserved skillet to medium-high heat. Whisk the butter into the bacon fat, then whisk in about ½ cup of the reserved pasta cooking water.

4 Add the pasta, asparagus, Parmesan, and reserved bacon to the skillet, gently tossing until the pasta and asparagus are fully coated in the sauce. Divide the pasta evenly among 4 plates.

5 Crack an egg into a ramekin or teacup. Pour off the most watery part of the white, and give the small pot a little swirl to get the water moving. Gently slide the egg into the water and cook until the white is firm, for 2½ minutes. Use a slotted spoon to lay the egg over one of the bowls of pasta, then repeat with the other 3 eggs. Top with the herbs, lots of pepper, and a bit of extra Parmesan.



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