

Recipe by Julia Heffelfinger

Asparagus & Prosciutto Breakfast Tart

Serves 4 to 6

This Asparagus and Prosciutto Breakfast Tart is impressive, elegant and worthy of a special occasion brunch like Easter or Mother's Day, but you can throw it together in under an hour. Frozen puff pastry, one of my favorite store-bought shortcuts, is a crispy, buttery canvas for early season asparagus. The crisp-tender vegetable creates little nests for the eggs and is so good with the verdant pesto and salty prosciutto. For the best results, make sure that your puff pastry is **cold** before it goes into the oven. The cold butter creates steam, which makes the pastry rise. If possible, stick it back into the fridge or freezer for 10 to 15 minutes after you've rolled it out and scored the dough.

All-purpose flour, for dusting

One 14-ounce package frozen puff pastry (preferably Dufour brand), thawed in the fridge overnight (See Note)

2 Tablespoons olive oil

1 pound thin asparagus spears, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces on the bias

1 large garlic clove, finely grated

1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice, plus finely grated lemon zest for serving

Kosher salt and pepper

½ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving

4 large eggs, at room temperature (see Note)

Store-bought or homemade pesto, for serving

3 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto

Flaky sea salt, for sprinkling

1. Preheat the oven to 400° and line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. On a lightly floured sheet of parchment paper, gently roll out the puff pastry to a large rectangle (about 10-by-15-inches). Using a paring knife, gently score a ½-inch border around the pastry. Do not cut through the dough. Using a fork, prick the puff pastry all over within the ½-inch border. Transfer the pastry to the prepared baking sheet. If possible, return to the refrigerator or freezer for 10 minutes. Bake the puff pastry for about 12 minutes, or until beginning to brown.
3. Meanwhile, in a medium skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Add the asparagus and cook over moderately-high heat, stirring occasionally for 2 minutes. Add the garlic and lemon juice and season with salt and pepper. Scrape the asparagus into a bowl.
4. Remove the puff pastry from the oven. Using your paring knife, gently score along the pre-cut border and then lightly press on the center of the puff pastry to help it deflate—you're creating a well for your tart toppings. Brush the pastry all over with the remaining tablespoon of olive oil. Scatter the parmesan cheese over the top, leaving a ½-inch border. Scatter the asparagus on top of the parmesan cheese and discard any liquid in the bowl. Create four small wells in the asparagus.

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5. Working one at a time, crack an egg into a small bowl (see **PRO TIP** below). Gently pour the egg into one of the wells. Repeat with the remaining 3 eggs. Season the eggs with salt. Return the tart to the oven and bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the egg whites are set and the yolks are still runny and the puff pastry is golden brown and puffed. The eggs will continue to cook slightly while the tart cools. Remove the tart from the oven.
6. Dollop some pesto on the asparagus tart and top with ribbons of prosciutto. Finish with more parmesan cheese and some freshly grated lemon zest. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt and more black pepper. Serve right away.

NOTE If you don't have time to thaw the puff pastry overnight, cover it with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes. It should be pliable, but hold its shape. If the pastry gets too soft while you're working with it, return to the freezer for 10 minutes.

Room temperature eggs will bake more evenly in the oven. If you are in a rush, place the eggs in a bowl of warm water for 5 minutes prior to using.

PRO-TIP To avoid your egg whites spreading across your tart, crack each egg one at a time into a fine mesh sieve set over a bowl and let the loose egg whites strain off. Then gently tip the egg into a small bowl or directly onto the tart.