

GREEN SESAME TONNATO with 180 DEGREES ASPARAGUS

Makes 1 ⅓ cups

REMEMBER, BEST PRACTICE: READ THE RECIPE START TO FINISH BEFORE YOU BEGIN COOKING!

If you have a Vitamix, it'll yield the smoothest results. For a thicker tonnato, use fewer herbs (they give off water when pureéd) and/or a touch more mayo. Speaking of herbs: I love using a mix of the three suggested, but tarragon or dill would excel here, as well (and bring an extra little spring-like quality to the sauce). Use leftover tonnato on salads, proteins, grilled vegetables, crudités, toasty bread, sandwiches, or on a cheese plate.

One (6- to 7-ounce) jar tuna in olive oil

1 cup (packed with gusto) parsley, cilantro, and/or basil, roughly chopped

1-2 lemons

1 garlic clove, grated

⅓ cup mayonnaise

½ teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 anchovy, plus more to fit your taste

1 tablespoon (packed) capers, plus additional if desired

¾ teaspoon sesame oil, plus additional to taste and for serving

1 tablespoon olive oil, plus additional for serving

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 pound asparagus, bottom 1- to 2-inches trimmed

Pecorino Romano, for serving

Toasted sesame seeds, for serving

Maldon salt, for serving

1. Drain the tuna from a **6- to 7-ounce jar tuna**, reserving **1 tablespoon of the olive oil**. Transfer both the **1 tablespoon oil** and **tuna** to a blender, along with **1 cup packed and roughly chopped herbs**, the **zest of 1 lemon**, **3 tablespoons lemon juice**, **1 grated garlic clove**, **⅓ cup mayonnaise**, **½ teaspoon Dijon mustard**, **1 anchovy**, **1 tablespoon capers**, **¾ teaspoon sesame oil**, and **1 tablespoon olive oil**.

2. Blend until very, very smooth, scraping down the bowl as necessary. It may take a bit of budging to get the mixture puréeing but it will happen! Season to taste with **salt** and **pepper**. The sauce should taste punchy and full of flavor. If it doesn't, add more salt, lemon juice. Be aggressive with your seasoning! And customize: want more 'chovy flavor? More brininess from capers? Go for it. Transfer to the refrigerator until well-chilled.

3. Prepare an ice water bath. Fill a wide, high-sided skillet or large pot with water and bring to a boil. **Salt** generously and add **1 pound trimmed asparagus**. Let cook 2-3 minutes, until crisp-tender. (I prefer more crisp than tender. If you want a slightly more blanched spear, let cook for a minute longer.)

4. Transfer the asparagus to the ice bath and let sit until cold, swishing the water from time to time, about 1-2 minutes. Drain immediately. (Leaving vegetables in a water bath for too long will waterlog them and leech all of the salt that you just infused into them while blanching.)

5. Pat dry. (If not serving right away, transfer to the refrigerator.) Slather a platter with a generous amount of the chilled Sesame Tonnato and pile the asparagus on top. Using a vegetable peeler, shave a generous amount of **Pecorino Romano** on top, and drizzle liberally with **olive oil** and (a little less liberally) **sesame oil**. Sprinkle with **toasted sesame seeds**, **Maldon salt**, and **freshly ground black pepper**. Add a **squeeze of lemon** and serve it up, with all the seasonings and extra Sesame Tonnato on the side to continue to dress and slather as you dismantle the pile of spears.

NOODLE