



### **Spring Asparagus Rotini with Basil Pesto**

*Fresh lemon juice brightens Italian pasta enhanced with tender asparagus*

3.5 ounces Maitake (Hen of the Woods) mushrooms

1 Tablespoon olive oil

1 onion, peeled, chopped

Sea salt; ground black pepper as needed

12 ounces regular or gluten free rotini pasta

1-pound fresh asparagus, trimmed, cut into 1-1/2-inch pieces

7 ounces basil pesto

4 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice or as desired

Cinnamon sweetened pecans as desired; lemon juice

Garnish: 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. Clean by wiping mushrooms with a damp cloth. Trim off any hard parts and remove the thin “petal-like” edges; set aside. Dice the clean remaining parts.
2. Heat oil on medium heat in skillet until hot; add onion and chopped mushrooms; sauté until softened; season lightly with salt and black pepper; add the remaining

thin mushroom's "petals-like" edges; sauté several minutes to soften. Remove from heat; keep warm; set aside.

3. Bring a large (6 quart) pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the rotini pasta; and cook, stirring occasionally, until nearly tender about 2 to 3 minutes less than the package directions. Add the asparagus; cook with the pasta until both are tender, about another 2 to 3 minutes. Drain but set aside some of the pasta water to use if needed to make a smoother pasta sauce.
4. Toss with the pesto and lemon juice; season with salt and black pepper to taste. Add some pasta water if needed to make a smoother pasta sauce.
5. Spoon into serving dish; add cinnamon glazed pecans as desired; sprinkle with some grated Parmesan cheese. Serve with additional grated Parmesan cheese on the side. Serves: 4 to 6

**About the Recipe:** Combining pasta with fresh spring ingredients creates a bright flavored supper. The mushrooms add an earthy essence blended with the sauteed onions. Fresh lemon juice and sweet basil pesto add a spirited Italian accent. Add some cinnamon glazed pecans for a crunch surprise.