

Multiple ways to enjoy asparagus

By Russ Parsons, Los Angeles Times

Can it be mere coincidence that March heralds the arrival of both my birthday and the first California asparagus? I think not. As Einstein said, God doesn't play dice with the universe.

And while I no longer am filled with the same childlike excitement about each approaching birthday, I do feel that way – or maybe stronger – about the start of asparagus season.

For the last couple weeks, I've been stopping by the Zuckerman's Farm stand at my Long Beach farmers market asking when the jumbos will be arriving. Maybe this weekend? Certainly next.

With great asparagus like this – big around as your thumb, available only for about a month ever year – the simplest cooking is best. I buy a pound a person, steam them just until they sag when lifted – they'll be on the edge of mousse-y with almost no crispness left, and with a profound clean fresh asparagus flavor – and then dress them with good olive oil, lemon juice and coarse salt. Toss in a loaf of good bread and a bottle of Navarro Gewurztraminer and you've got a feast to remember.

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