

# Omelet Santa Cruz

*Omelets in the style of my home town Santa Cruz, California, using fresh local ingredients. These celebrate the bounty of the Monterey Bay both on land and in the sea. They can be prepared either French (tri-fold) or American style (bi-fold) depending on chef skill and/or diner preference. Serves two omelets.*

## Ingredients:

- 1 short thin boneless skinless salmon filet to fit pan (Atlantic or Pacific depending on availability)
- 4-6 eggs (depending on appetites)
- 4 artichoke hearts in jar (or fresh depending on aggressiveness of chef)
- Feta cheese
- Shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 0.25 cup (60 ml) "Half-n-Half" or whole milk
- 2 tablespoons (28.5 grams) unsalted butter
- 2 fresh young slender asparagus stalks
- 0.125 (1/8) teaspoon (0.25 gram) fresh grated nutmeg
- 0.25 teaspoon (0.5 gram) freshly-grated lemon zest
- Dried dill
- White pepper
- Kosher salt

## Procedure:

Trim ends of filet to fit omelet pan as necessary, reserving any scraps for a Salmon Tartar. Lightly salt and pepper filet then add the nutmeg using a micro-plane (up to the 1/8 teaspoon, OK to use less) and the fresh lemon zest. Let filet stand for at least 10 minutes to absorb spices while pan heats up. Heat thick pan over medium heat and melt 1 tablespoon butter until just melted. Lower salmon filet into pan and let gently sear on each side. Lower "Half-n-Half" or whole milk into pan and dust filet with a little dill. Cover with a little shredded Monterey Jack and cover, letting braise for about 5 minutes or until about mostly cooked according to diner preference (some like it well-done, some like it practically sashimi). Remove pan from heat and reserve for omelets. This step can be omitted for vegetarians. A tofu or TVP substitute could be used in place but not contemplated here. My apologies to vegans.

While filet is braising, liberally salt a small amount of water in a pot and place a steamer tray or basket inside then place asparagus inside. If only the fat, tough, imported asparagus is available, use a vegetable peeler and peel the lower part of the stalks until tender to gentle squeezing (also a good trick for broccoli stalks which get tender and tasty like artichoke hearts - my thanks to Chef Jacques Pepin for that tip). Preserve the shavings for future use in making a stock or at least in a garden compost pit. Take artichoke hearts out of jar and let come to room temperature wrapped lightly in paper towels drain off a little bit of the oil. Steam asparagus until a toothpick just slides in and out cleanly. Remove pot from heat and reserve for omelets.

In another thick nonstick pan, heat on medium-low heat and melt the remaining tablespoon of butter. In a small clear glass bowl, depending on desired size of omelet, crack 2-3 large fresh eggs which have been allowed to approach room-temperature. Sprinkle in a little pepper and whisk for a few seconds with a fork (do NOT whisk until a uniform yolk-yellow). Do not add any water or milk and do not use a wire bulb whisk. Once butter in pan has melted and just begun to foam, pour in the whisked eggs and tilt pan around so eggs fill entire bottom and thin out. Using a rubber spatula, push from sides to middle to keep eggs moving until the top just begins to dry. Do not let eggs scramble or scorch. Crumble feta cheese on one half of the eggs to melt.

Take filet out of other pan and cut in half lengthwise. Place the half-filet in the appropriate position to accommodate either a tri- or bi-fold according to desired style. For the American bi-fold omelet let the bottom get just a little golden-brown (any color on a French tri-fold omelet is unacceptable). Quickly dice 2 artichoke hearts and place on half-filet. Fold the omelet and plate. Take out one asparagus and slice in half lengthwise. Place on top of omelet with tips alternating direction. Dust with a little more dill on top and serve. Repeat for second omelet. You could top the omelets with a ladle of Hollandaise sauce for extra fancy flavor (sauce recipe not included here).

Goes great with fresh apple or grapefruit juice or as a brunch with a Mimosa. When taking certain medications beware grapefruit juice as it can enhance and/or lengthen the dose.

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