

Oriental Asparagus and Beef

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Asparagus works great in stir-fries, as it cooks up perfectly golden crisp in the hot skillet. Paired with tender flank steak, this savory dish might cause you to lose the take-out number of your standby Chinese restaurant.

Ingredients:

1 ½ pounds asparagus, diagonally sliced into ½-inch pieces
¼ cup vegetable oil, divided
½ pound flank steak, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon fermented black bean paste (available at Asian or international aisle)
1 ½ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon sugar
½ cup chicken stock
1 tablespoon cornstarch, mixed with 1 tablespoon water

Directions:

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add asparagus and cook 2 minutes, until softened. Drain and set aside.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a wok or skillet over high heat. When hot, add steak and cook until no longer pink, 1 to 2 minutes, stirring. Remove from wok and set aside. Add remaining oil to wok and heat; add asparagus and cook until lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes, stirring. Add reserved steak, bean paste, salt, and sugar. Stir to mix.
3. Add stock and stir to incorporate, 2 to 3 minutes. Add cornstarch mixture and cook, stirring, until sauce thickens and mixture is smooth. Remove from heat and serve immediately.