

# Cook's Country

## Asparagus-Goat Cheese Tart

**SERVES** Serves 4 as a main dish

### WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

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To make a delicious yet simple tart with fresh spring asparagus, we take advantage of store-bought puff pastry. We bake the pastry with a weighted pan on top for the first 15 minutes, which creates the “shell” for our fillings. Tangy goat cheese, thinned out with some olive oil, is the glue that holds the asparagus in place, and by cutting the spears into thin pieces, we found that they needed no precooking. Scallions, garlic, olives, and lemon zest round out the flavors of the tart and create a bright contrast to the flaky, buttery crust.



### INGREDIENTS

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- 1 (9 1/2 by 9-inch) sheet puff pastry, thawed
- 6 ounces asparagus, trimmed and cut 1/4 inch thick on bias into 1-inch lengths (1 cup)
- 2 scallions, sliced thin
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped pitted kalamata olives

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

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 To thaw frozen puff pastry, allow it to sit either in the refrigerator for 24 hours or on the counter for 30 minutes to 1 hour. Pennies work well in place of pie weights; if you use a pyrex baking dish to weigh down the puff pastry, you can skip the pie weights altogether. Cutting the asparagus into thin pieces allows it to become tender without precooking.

- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ¼ teaspoon grated lemon zest
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 4 ounces (1 cup) goat cheese, softened

## INSTRUCTIONS

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**1** Adjust oven racks to lower-middle and top positions and heat oven to 400 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and place puff pastry in center of sheet. Grease underside of 8-inch square baking pan, place in center of puff pastry, and fill pan with pie weights. Using sharp paring knife, score puff pastry around perimeter of pan, 1/8 inch deep. (Do not cut through pastry.)

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**2** Leaving pan on pastry, bake on lower-middle oven rack for 20 minutes. Remove pan, rotate sheet, and continue to bake until pastry is golden brown, 5 to 10 minutes. Let cool for 30 minutes.

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**3** Meanwhile, combine asparagus, scallions, 1 tablespoon oil, olives, garlic, zest, salt, and pepper in bowl. In separate bowl, mix 3/4 cup goat cheese and 1 tablespoon oil until smooth. Spread goat cheese mixture evenly over cooled puff pastry (avoiding raised border), then scatter asparagus mixture over top. Crumble remaining 1/4 cup goat cheese over top of asparagus mixture.

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**4** Bake tart on top oven rack until asparagus is tender and tart shell has darkened slightly around edges, 10 to 15 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes. Drizzle with remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Cut into 4 equal pieces and serve.