Asparagus Sauté

Time and time again, I turn to a cookbook that I bought from a sale rack at the local bookstore. Just a lucky find. It’s a thick old thing that would normally intimidate me. (I don’t cook much, so I tend to stick with friendly little cookbooks with lots of pictures and words like “quick and easy” on the cover.) But it was on sale, so how could I resist?

It’s become my go-to cookbook because this thing has recipes for just about everything. It is 20 years old by now, with food stains on many pages and notes scribbled in the margins. “This one is delicious!” or “Yum!” or “Under no circumstances should you ever attempt this one again.”

I recently tried a recipe called Chinese Asparagus. “Yum!” I wrote. Then I decided to modify it… and I’m proud to say, I like my Asparagus Sauté even better. It’s colorful and delicious!

Kate Carlisle’s Asparagus, Cashew and Cranberry Sauté

2 lb asparagus, sliced ¼ inch thick
1 T cornstarch
2 T cold water
1 C chicken broth
1 T dry white wine
1 t maple syrup
2 T sesame oil
1 T olive oil
½ C cashews
½ C dried cranberries

In a small sauce pan, mix together cornstarch and cold water with a whisk. Add broth, soy sauce, white wine, and maple syrup. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Simmer until slightly thick, about one minute.

In a wok, heat both oils until shimmering. Add the asparagus and cashews. Sauté for 3 minutes. Add the sauce and cranberries. Cook for one more minute. (Note: If you want to make this a complete meal, sauté shrimp along with the asparagus and cashews, then serve over white rice.)