

Butter-Steamed Broccoli with Peppery Bread Crumbs

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

- 1½ cups coarse bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- Salt
- 1 large head or 2 medium heads broccoli (1½ to 2 pounds)
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 ounces Parmesan cheese, for shaving

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Spread bread crumbs on a rimmed baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Bake until golden, about 10 minutes, turning pan and stirring crumbs occasionally to ensure even browning. Remove from oven and transfer crumbs to a bowl. Stir in black pepper and salt to taste. Set aside at room temperature.
2. Cut off thick stems of broccoli and save for another purpose, such as soup. Cut broccoli tops into 3-inch-long spears of approximately equal size.
3. Put a large skillet over medium-high heat. Melt butter, add broccoli spears and season with salt. Add 1 cup water, turn heat to high and cover skillet with a tightfitting lid. Cook rapidly until firm-tender but still bright green, about 5 minutes.
4. The broccoli should absorb all the butter and water. (If there is any buttery liquid left, spoon over broccoli just before serving.)
5. Transfer broccoli to a serving platter or a large wide shallow bowl. Sprinkle generously with peppery crumbs. Using a vegetable peeler, shave Parmesan into rough shards and scatter over the top.