

# ASPARAGUS



Asparagus is in season from April through June.

## Tips for selecting asparagus

Select stalks that are firm and straight with compact tips. The spears should be round and snap easily when bent. Asparagus should be a vibrant green color. Do not choose asparagus if:

- it is badly scarred,
- it is droopy and wilted, or
- the tips are spreading.

## Storage

Asparagus is best eaten the day it is harvested. To store it, trim  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off the bottom of the stalks and place in 2 inches of standing water, or wrap a moist towel around it. Asparagus can be stored in the refrigerator for two to three days.

## Preparation

Rinse with cold water. Cut off the bottom of the stalk, as it is usually woody and tough. Pare away any rough edges with a potato peeler. Asparagus can be steamed, boiled, or roasted with olive oil.

## Key nutrients

- Fiber to prevent constipation
- Folate to prevent birth defects and reduce the risk of heart disease
- Potassium to maintain normal blood pressure
- Vitamin A for vision, healthy skin, and resistance to infection
- Vitamin C for healthy gums, skin, and blood

## Recipes

### Asparagus with lemon mustard vinaigrette

- 1½ pounds fresh asparagus, washed and trimmed
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 teaspoons lemon and pepper seasoning
- 1 tablespoon country-style Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon red-wine vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive or vegetable oil

Steam or boil the asparagus for 7 to 10 minutes or until tender. Rinse with cold water. Place the asparagus on a large platter and top with the red onion. Combine the remaining ingredients, drizzle over the asparagus, and serve. Serves 6; 120 Cal; 9 g fat.

### Asparagus with yogurt dill sauce

- 2 pounds fresh asparagus, steamed
  - 3 cloves garlic, minced
  - 2 tablespoons lemon juice
  - 1 teaspoon prepared mustard (e.g., Dijon)
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
  - $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon pepper
  - 2 tablespoons parsley, minced
  - 1 teaspoon minced dill
  - 1 cup yogurt
- Mix everything except the asparagus together in a bowl and allow it to stand for at least an hour before serving. Serve over steamed asparagus. Serves 8; 50 Cal; less than 1 g fat.



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