

Asparagus

Choose green stalks with dark green to purplish tips which are closed and compact. Thinner stalks are more tender than thicker stalks.

Asparagus are vegetables which grow as plant stalks (stems).

Many Greeks and Romans not only enjoyed the taste of asparagus but also believed the myth it possessed medicinal properties (from healing toothaches to preventing bee stings). Asparagus gained popularity in France and England in the 16th Century and was then introduced to North America.

In the United States 80% of asparagus are grown in California. Asparagus season is early spring.

VARIETIES

Asparagus can be found in two varieties. Green asparagus is the most common in the United States, while white asparagus is more popular in Europe. White asparagus is grown under the soil.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of fiber
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of iron

USES

Asparagus is good steamed, stir-fried or cooked in the microwave. It can be used in salads, pasta dishes, stir fries or eaten cold with your favorite dip.



Asparagus with Lemon
Preparation time: 15 minutes
Number of servings: 4
Cups of fruits or vegetables per serving: 1



2 lbs. asparagus, tough ends trimmed
2 tsp. olive oil
3 T. lemon juice
salt and black pepper, to taste

1. In a large saucepan, place asparagus in 1 inch boiling water.
2. Cover and steam for 5 minutes or until asparagus is bright green and tender.
3. Rinse asparagus under cold water and drain.
4. In a small bowl, combine oil and lemon juice. Pour over asparagus.
5. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Nutrition Information per Serving: Calories 70, Total Fat 3 g (4% DV), Saturated Fat 0 g (0% DV), Cholesterol 0 mg (0% DV), Sodium 0 mg (0% DV), Total Carbohydrate 9 g (3% DV), Dietary Fiber 5 g (20% DV), Sugars 4 g, Protein 5 g, Vitamin A 35%, Vitamin C 25%, Calcium 6%, Iron 25%.

Asparagus with Sole
Preparation time: 1 hour
Number of servings: 4
Cups of fruits or vegetables per serving: 0.5



1 lb. asparagus, tough ends trimmed	4 T. lemon or lime juice, freshly squeezed
1 lb. Sole fillets (4 pieces approximately the same size)	1/8 tsp. black pepper
1/4 tsp. salt	1 T. chives, finely chopped
1/2 tsp. grated lemon or lime peel	1 tsp. mustard

1. Preheat oven to 400° F. Spray a 9x13-inch baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Wash and cut asparagus into 3-inch pieces. Place in a large saucepan in lightly salted water.
3. Cook over medium heat for 5 minutes, drain. Set aside.
4. Season the skin side of the sole fillets with salt and lemon or lime peel.
5. Place asparagus spears at one end of each fillet.
6. Roll up fillets with asparagus spears inside and secure with plain round toothpicks.
7. Place fillets in the prepared baking dish.
8. In a small bowl, combine remaining ingredients and pour over fish.
9. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until fish is white in color and flakes easily with a fork.

Nutrition Information per Serving: Calories 130, Total Fat 2 g (2% DV), Saturated Fat 0 g (0% DV), Cholesterol 55 mg (18% DV), Sodium 270 mg (11% DV), Total Carbohydrate 6 g (2% DV), Dietary Fiber 2 g (20% DV), Sugars 2 g, Protein 24 g, Vitamin A 25%, Vitamin C 30%, Calcium 4%, Iron 8%.