

Asparagus



Selecting

The most common variety of asparagus is green, but white and purple varieties are also available. When selecting asparagus, find spears that are straight and crisp-looking.

Avoid soggy or wilted tips. Tips should be closed, compact and firm, and a strong shade of green or purple. Stem ends should be moist and green. Quite often you will find asparagus ends sitting in water in the supermarket to keep them moist.

Look for spears of uniform size to make it easier for cooking.

Storing

Keep asparagus refrigerated and moist. You can either store them two ways: 1) by wrapping the ends in damp paper towel, covering with a plastic bag, and keeping it in the crisper; or 2) standing the asparagus spears in a jug of water covered with a plastic bag, and keeping it in the fridge. Remember to remove any rubber bands before storing.

Asparagus can be stored up to 3 days but is best eaten as soon as possible.

Preparing

Wash asparagus well to remove any sand. Either wash under running water or soak in water for a few minutes. Snap

off the woody bottom ends to remove.

You can cook asparagus in a little boiling water. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes and keep the pan uncovered so the asparagus keeps its nice colour.

Roasting intensifies the flavour. Just add a small amount of olive oil and lemon juice or balsamic vinegar to the asparagus, spread the spears in a single layer on a baking sheet, and roast at 400F° for 6 to 15 minutes (depending on the thickness of the asparagus).

Grilling, microwaving, and stir frying are some other ways to prepare asparagus.

Eating

Asparagus is very versatile. It can be served on its own as a side dish or added to salads, soups or entrées.

Seasonality

Asparagus has a short growing season. Fresh, local asparagus is available from April to June.

Nutrition

Six spears of asparagus have only 18 calories. It provides lots of Vitamin C, potassium, and B vitamins including folate.



Here is a great recipe for a **Chicken salad with grilled asparagus.**
www.halfyourplate.ca/recipe/barley-asparagus-chicken-salad/

