



Give Them More
of the
Good Stuff!

Asparagus Basics



Shop and Save

- ❁ Look for asparagus with stalks that are firm and tips that are tightly closed. Avoid stalks that look limp or wilted.
- ❁ The thickness of the stalk does not determine its quality. All sizes, from thin to thick, can be tender and flavorful.
- ❁ Choose stalks that are similar in size. They will be easier to prepare and cook evenly.
- ❁ Choose local asparagus for best flavor and quality. Find it fresh in Oregon in April and May.
- ❁ Asparagus is also available canned and frozen.

Asparagus is an excellent source of folate, a vitamin that helps make new cells and is important for a healthy pregnancy.



Grow Asparagus

- ❁ Asparagus can be worthwhile to grow because it can produce fresh spears for up to 30 years.
- ❁ Plants need a large space with full sun and soil that drains well.
- ❁ Start seeds indoors or find one-year-old plants (called crowns or roots) at garden supply stores.
- ❁ Wait to harvest spears for 2 to 3 years so that roots can grow strong. A mature plant will provide ½ to 1 pound of spears each year.
- ❁ Green and purple asparagus grow from different plant varieties, but green and white grow from the same plant. When spears grow up through the ground, exposure to sunlight turns them green. Spears will be white if they are covered while growing.

Store Well Waste Less

- ❁ Refrigerate fresh asparagus for up to four days.
 - Stand stalks in 1 inch of water like a flower bouquet and cover with a plastic bag.
 - OR
 - Wrap cut ends in a damp paper towel and cover the towel with plastic.
- ❁ Rinse under cool running water just before using.



- ❁ To remove tough ends:
 - Hold an end of a stalk in one hand and the middle of the stalk in the other hand. Gently bend to snap.
 - OR
 - Cut off the bottom inch of the stalks, then peel tougher base ends if needed.



Enjoy Asparagus

Roasted Asparagus

Ingredients:

- 1 pound **asparagus**, trimmed
- 1 teaspoon **vegetable oil**
- 1 dash each **salt** and **pepper**

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Leave stalks whole or cut into shorter lengths.
3. Toss asparagus with oil, salt and pepper. Place in a single layer on large baking sheet.
4. Roast for 12 to 15 minutes or until the pieces are lightly browned.
5. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Makes 2 cups

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

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for tasty
asparagus
recipes

Asparagus Mushroom Melt

Ingredients:

- 4 **English muffins**
- 1 ½ teaspoons **vegetable oil**
- ¼ cup finely minced **onion** (any type)
- 1 cup chopped **mushrooms**
- ½ pound **asparagus**, trimmed and sliced crosswise into ½-inch rounds
- ¾ teaspoon dried **thyme**, oregano or basil
- 1 ½ teaspoons **vinegar** or lemon juice
- 1 dash each **salt** and **pepper**
- 3 ounces (¾ cup) shredded **mozzarella cheese**

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Toast muffin halves and place on a baking sheet in a single layer.
3. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook onions and mushrooms, stirring often, until just beginning to brown.
4. Add asparagus, thyme and vinegar. Stir often until asparagus is barely tender, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add salt and pepper.
5. Turn on oven to Broil setting.
6. Divide vegetable mixture onto the muffin halves. Top each muffin with shredded cheese.
7. Broil muffins for about 30 seconds, or until the cheese melts. Watch carefully to avoid burning.
8. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Makes 8 muffin halves

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: about 15 minutes



Kids Can!

When kids help make healthy food, they are more likely to try it. Show kids how to:

- snap off the woody end of stalks.
- rinse vegetables under cool running water.
- toast English muffins.