



# Asparagus

## The Health Benefits of Asparagus

Asparagus is a member of the cancer-fighting cruciferous family. In addition, this stalk also contains nutrients that also lower risk of diabetes, control blood pressure and boost brain health. It is anti inflammatory which lowers risk for all chronic diseases.

### One cup of raw or 1/2 cup cooked asparagus provides:

- 27 Calories, 3 gm protein, 3 grams fiber, 0 fat, no cholesterol

### Nutrients in Asparagus

- Great source of folate, vitamin K and potassium for heart health; high in fiber, calcium, and magnesium; also provides vitamins A & C and minerals iron, chromium and selenium
- High folate can prevent neural-tube defects during pregnancy
- The compound, asparagine, helps rid the body of excess salts
- Can be eaten raw or lightly steamed, grilled or stir-fried. You can find asparagus in white, green and purple varieties

For more information, visit our website:  
[www.advancedhealth.com/healthy-bytes-initiative](http://www.advancedhealth.com/healthy-bytes-initiative)

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# Give Your Family More of the Good Stuff!



## Asparagus Basics

### \$hop and \$ave

- ✿ Look for stalks that are firm with tightly closed tips. Color can be bright green, creamy white or even purple.
- ✿ Stalks with the same thickness will cook in the same amount of time.
- ✿ Fresh asparagus may be best quality and lowest price when harvested locally, usually April and May.
- ✿ Asparagus is also available canned and frozen.

### Asparagus Math:

One pound = 12 to 15 spears,  
9 to 10 inches long and 1/2  
to 3/4 inches thick  
= 3 cups trimmed  
= 2 1/2 cups cooked

*Asparagus is an excellent source of Vitamin K,  
which helps build strong bones.*



### Types of Asparagus

Generally, thinner spears are more delicate and tender; thicker spears have stronger flavor and hearty texture. Thicker spears can be sliced on the diagonal into smaller pieces to cook more quickly.

- ✿ Green – the most common type.
- ✿ White – covered with soil as it grows to keep green pigments from developing. Considered a delicacy and may cost more than green.
- ✿ Purple – has more sugar and less fiber than green. The skin is burgundy or purple but the flesh is pale green to creamy white. Cooking may cause more green to show. Less commonly available and may cost more than green.

### Store Well Waste Less

■ Refrigerate fresh asparagus for up to 5 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.



■ Wash under cool running water just before using. Remove tough ends:

- Hold an end of the stalk in each hand and gently bend.

OR

- Less waste: cut off and discard the bottom inch of the stalks, then peel tougher base ends.



# Cooking with Asparagus

## Fix Asparagus Many Ways

Asparagus cooks quickly. Cook it until just barely tender. Thicker stalks take longer to cook. Overcooked or reheated cooked asparagus may become bitter and stringy or mushy.

- ✿ **Boil** or blanch in enough water to cover the stalks.
- ✿ **Steam** over boiling water.
- ✿ **Sauté** or stir-fry in a small amount of oil or fat.
- ✿ **Roast** or grill until lightly browned.

Try chilled asparagus (raw or leftover cooked) in salads

## Roasted Asparagus

### Ingredients:

1 pound **asparagus**, trimmed

1 teaspoon **oil**

Dash of **salt** and **pepper**

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
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** 2½ cups

**Prep time:** 10 minutes

**Cook time:** 15 minutes

## Asparagus Mushroom Melt

### Ingredients:

4 **English muffins**

¼ cup **onion**, finely minced

1 cup **mushrooms**, chopped

1½ teaspoons **oil**

½ pound **asparagus**, trimmed and sliced crosswise into ½ inch rounds

¾ teaspoon ground **thyme** or **oregano** or **basil**

1½ teaspoons **vinegar**

Dash of **salt** and **pepper**

3 ounces (¾ cup) **mozzarella cheese**, shredded

### Directions:

1. Toast muffin halves and place on a baking sheet in a single layer.
2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, sauté onions and mushrooms in oil, stirring often, until just beginning to brown.
3. Add asparagus, seasoning and vinegar. Sauté, stirring often, until asparagus is barely tender. Season lightly with salt and pepper.
4. Divide the vegetable mixture equally onto the muffin halves. Top each muffin with shredded cheese.
5. Broil muffins until the cheese melts. Watch carefully to avoid burning.
6. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

**Makes** 8 muffin halves

**Prep time:** 15 minutes

**Cook 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.
- ✿ wash vegetables under cool running water.
- ✿ toast English muffins.