

**Frontier Extension District**

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Health and Nutrition  
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## Asparagus Tips!

### Simple Cooking Basics

#### ▶ Selecting

- Select bright green asparagus with closed, compact, firm tips.
- If the tips are slightly wilted, fresh them up by soaking them in cold water.

#### ▶ Size



**Jumbo:**  
Not less than 13/16 of  
an inch in diameter.



**Extra Large:**  
Not less than 10/16 of  
an inch in diameter.



**Large:**  
Not less than 7/16 of  
an inch in diameter.



**Standard:**  
Not less than 5/16 of  
an inch in diameter.

#### ▶ Storage

- Keep fresh asparagus moist until you intend to use it.
- Keep frozen asparagus in the freezer until you are ready.
- Do not defrost before cooking. If the asparagus defrosts, cook it immediately.
- Do not refreeze! Make sure you use the asparagus within eight months.
- Keep canned asparagus in a cool, dry place.

#### ▶ Serving Suggestions

- For purée, soups or salads, break or cut Asparagus spears at the tender part and use the trimmed ends that you might otherwise discard.
- Place them in a covered saucepan and boil until tender.
- Strain through a sieve or food mill forcing some of the pulp through, or process in a food processor or blender. Use as purée or mix with the cooking water for soups, stews, creamed dishes, or sauces.
- For easy, fun grilling, skewer several spears with bamboo skewers to make a unique "raft".

## APPROXIMATE COOKING TIMES

### ▶ TO BOIL

Place whole trimmed asparagus in a large skillet with 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 inches of water. Boil and start timing; reduce heat and briskly simmer, uncovered, for allotted time.

### ▶ TO STEAM

Place asparagus on a steamer rack in a large saucepot over rapidly boiling water (water should come up to the rack but not over it). Cover saucepot and start timing. Steam for allotted time.

### ▶ TO MICROWAVE

Arrange asparagus in a glass baking dish, with tips overlapping in center. Cover dish with plastic wrap, turning back one corner to vent steam. Microwave at HIGH (100%) power for allotted time. Let stand 3 to 5 minutes.

### ▶ TO STIR-FRY

Cut asparagus spears into 1/4 inch diagonal slices, keeping tips whole. In a large skillet heat 1 to 2 tbsp. Vegetable oil; add asparagus pieces and stir-fry for allotted time.

## Nutritional Facts

One serving of asparagus is low in calories and very low in sodium. Asparagus is an excellent source of folic acid and is a fairly significant source of Vitamin C, Thiamin, and Vitamin B6. Asparagus contains no cholesterol or dietary significance. It is an important source of potassium and many micronutrients.

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily value may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs. Research by the Produce Marketing Association.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>			
Serving Size 5 spears (93g)			
Amount per serving			
Calories 25		Calories from fat 0	
% Daily Value*			
<b>Total Fat</b>	<b>0g</b>		<b>0%</b>
<b>Saturated Fat</b>	<b>0g</b>		<b>0%</b>
<b>Cholesterol</b>	<b>0mg</b>		<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b>	<b>0mg</b>		<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	<b>4g</b>		<b>1%</b>
<b>Dietary Fiber</b>	<b>2g</b>		<b>8%</b>
<b>Sugars</b>	<b>2g</b>		
<b>Protein</b>	<b>2g</b>		
Vitamin A	10%	■	Vitamin C 15%
Calcium	2%	■	Iron 2%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:			
Calories: 2,000      2,500			
Total Fat	Less than	65g	50g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
Fat	9	●	Carbohydrate 4 ● Protein 4

# Asparagus Recipes

## **Asparagus Tossed Salad - 8 servings**

2 medium carrots, sliced  
1 pound asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces  
8 cups torn lettuce (or baby spinach)

### Orange Ginger Vinaigrette

¼ cup orange juice  
4 ½ tsp olive or canola oil  
1 TBSP white wine vinegar or cider vinegar  
1 TBSP honey  
½ tsp Dijon mustard  
¼ tsp ground ginger  
¼ tsp grated orange peel  
1/8 tsp salt

In large saucepan, bring 4 cups water to boil for 1 minute. Add asparagus, cover and boil 3 minutes longer. Drain and immediately place asparagus in ice water, drain and pat dry.

In salad bowl combine lettuce, carrots, and asparagus. In a jar with a tight fitting lid, combine Orange Ginger vinaigrette ingredients and shake well. Drizzle over salad and toss to coat. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Facts per 1 ¼ cup: 57 calories, 3 gm fat (trace saturated fat), 0 cholesterol, 61 mg sodium, 8 gm carbohydrates, 2 gm fiber, Diabetic Exchange: 1 vegetable 1 fat.

## **Fresh Asparagus, Tomato, and Feta Salad – 5 servings**

½ cup rice vinegar  
1 TBSP sugar  
1 tsp salt  
½ tsp sesame oil (I used olive oil)  
2 TBSP olive oil  
¾ pound asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces, cooked and drained  
4 ounces Feta (1 container)  
1 large tomato, diced  
1 green onion, diced  
2 TBSP chopped cilantro

Whisk together the rice vinegar, sugar, salt, sesame and olive oil, in bottom of salad bowl. Add the asparagus, feta, tomato, green onion, and cilantro to the bowl with dressing. Toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour before serving.

Nutrition Facts per 1/5 serving: 143 calories, 10.9 gm fat, 20 mg cholesterol, 609 sodium, 7.8 gm carbohydrates, 1.9 gm fiber, protein 5.1 gm.

## **Tomato Asparagus Salad – 4 servings**

¾ pound asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1 ½-inch pieces  
3 plum tomatoes, halved and sliced  
¾ cup red onion, chopped  
½ cup balsamic vinaigrette

Place asparagus in a steamer basket, place in saucepan over 1-inch of water. Bring to boil; cover and steam for 5-7 minutes or until crisp tender. Drain and immediately place asparagus in ice water to cool. Drain and pat dry.

In large bowl, combine the asparagus, tomatoes, and onion. Drizzle with vinaigrette and gently toss to coat. Serve with slotted spoon.

## **Oriental Asparagus Salad – 4 servings**

1 pound asparagus, cut into 2-inch pieces  
2 TBSP soy sauce  
1 TBSP canola oil  
1 TBSP vinegar  
1 ½ tsp sugar  
1 tsp sesame seeds, toasted  
¼ tsp ground ginger  
¼ tsp cumin

In saucepan, cook asparagus in small amount of water until tender-crisp, about 3-4 minutes. Drain well, pat dry, place in large bowl.

Combine remaining ingredients and pour over asparagus. Toss to coat. Cover and chill for 1 hour before serving. Drain before serving.

## **Grilled Asparagus Salad – 6 servings**

¼ cup olive oil  
1/8 cup lemon juice  
12 fresh asparagus spears  
6 cups fresh spinach leaves (bagged baby spinach)  
1/8 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 tbs seasoned slivered almonds

Preheat grill for low heat. Combine lemon juice and olive oil on plate. Roll asparagus to coat.

Grill asparagus for about 5 minutes, turning at least once, and brushing with olive oil mixture. Remove from grill and place back onto the plate with the oil.

In large bowl, combine spinach, Parmesan cheese, and slivered almonds. Cut asparagus into bite sized pieces and add to salad along with lemon juice and oil from the plate. Toss to blend. Serve.

Nutrition Facts per 1/6 serving: 105 calories, 9.8 gm fat; 2 mg cholesterol; 57 mg sodium; 3.2 mg carbohydrates; 1.5 gm fiber; 2.6 gm protein.

## **Asparagus & Bean Salad – 10 servings, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup**

1 pound asparagus, cut into 2-inch pieces  
1 (15 ounce) can chickpeas (garbanzo beans) drained, rinsed  
1 medium red onion, finely chopped  
4 ounces Monterey Jack Cheese, cut into  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch cubes  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup zesty Italian salad dressing  
2 tbsp chopped fresh mint leaves

Bring water to boil in medium saucepan. Add asparagus; cook 3 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain, immediately put asparagus into ice water. Cool completely; drain; pat dry. Place in large bowl.

Add remaining ingredients, toss lightly. Server immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve.

Nutrition Facts  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup serving: 140 calories; 7 gm fat; 2.5 gm saturated fat; 10 mg cholesterol; 300 mg sodium; 12 gm carbohydrates; 3 gm fiber; 6 gm protein.

## **Asparagus, Orange and Endive Salad – 6 servings**

2  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups diagonally sliced asparagus  
2 cups rinsed, dried and torn endive leaves  
2 large oranges, sliced into rounds  
1 red onion, thinly sliced  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup raspberry vinegar  
2 TBSP canola oil  
1 TBSP orange juice  
1 TBSP sugar  
salt and pepper to taste

Blanch asparagus in large pot of boiling water for 1 minute, drain; plunge asparagus into bowl of ice water. Cool, drain again, pat dry.

In large bowl combine asparagus, endive, oranges, and red onion.

Whisk together the raspberry vinegar, canola oil, orange juice, sugar, salt and pepper. Add dressing to asparagus endive mixture; toss well and serve.

Nutrition Facts for  $\frac{1}{6}$  serving: 111 calories; 5g fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 9 mg sodium; 16.2 gm fiber; 3.6 gm carbohydrates; 2.4 gm protein.

## **Rice, Asparagus and Cucumber Salad – 6 servings**

1 3/4 Cups water  
1 cup long-grain white rice  
1 pound thin asparagus spears, trimmed and cut into 1 inch spears  
1 1/2 Cups English cucumber-peeled, seeded and chopped  
3 green onions, chopped  
2 TBSP Dijon mustard  
1 TBSP white sugar  
1 TBSP white wine vinegar  
1/2 tsp dry mustard  
2 1/2 TBSP vegetable oil  
1/4 Cup chopped fresh dill weed  
4 heads butter lettuce

In a medium saucepan, bring 1 3/4 cups water to boil. Add rice, return to boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook until water is absorbed and rice is tender, about 20 minutes. Fluff with fork; transfer to bowl. Cool to room temperature.

Cook asparagus in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until tender, about 1 minute. Drain and rinse with cold water to cool. Cut the asparagus into 1-inch-pieces. Add asparagus, cucumber, and green onions to rice.

Whisk together the mustard, sugar, vinegar, dry mustard, oil, and chopped dill. Cover salad and dressing separately. Refrigerate until chilled.

Pour dressing into salad and season with salt and pepper. Line large bowl with lettuce and mound salad in bowl. Garnish with dill sprigs.

Nutrition Facts for 1/6 serving: 214 calories; 6.4g fat; 0mg cholesterol; 138 mg sodium; 34.7 carbs, fiber 3.6g; 5.8g protein

## **GRILLED MOJO CHICKEN SALAD WITH ASPARAGUS AND ORANGES-** 6 Servings

½ C orange juice concentrate  
1/3 c fresh lime juice  
2 large garlic cloves, chopped  
1 TBSP chopped fresh mint  
1 tsp dried oregano  
1 tsp ground ginger  
½ tsp salt; and pepper to taste  
6 TBSP extra-virgin oil plus extra for drizzling  
1 ¾ lbs boneless skinless chicken breast  
3 oranges  
1 bunch medium asparagus, tough ends snapped off  
12 C mixed salad greens

Whisk first seven (7) ingredients plus 2 Tbs. oil in a 2 Cup measuring cup. Pour all but ¾ cup of mixture into a gallon-sized zipper bag. Add chicken; seal and refrigerate for 30 minutes to 4 hours. Whisk ¼ cup of oil into remaining mixture for dressing. Peel and section oranges. Sprinkle asparagus with oil, salt and pepper.

Build a fire on only one side of grill (to conserve charcoal) When coals are covered with white ash, place chicken on rack over direct hear, cover and grill until well browned, 4 to 6 minutes. Turn, cover and grill another 4 to 6 minutes. Remove chicken and add asparagus spears perpendicular to rack. Grill 3 to 5 minutes, until well browned and just cooked through.

Remove chicken and let stand for 5 minutes or up to 1 hour. Cut crosswise, into ½ inch thick slices. Toss greens, oranges, salt, and pepper with the most of the dressing. Arrange salad in six shallow bowls. Place chicken and asparagus over each. Drizzle with remaining dressing.

**For gas grill:** at least 10 minutes before cooking, turn all burners on high. Clean rack with wire brush, then use tongs to wipe paper towels soaked in vegetable oil over it. Place chicken and asparagus on rack, being careful not to overcrowd. Cover and cook until chicken and asparagus are well browned, about 3 minutes. Turn and continue to grill, covered, until asparagus is just tender, 2 to 3 minutes longer and chicken has cooked through, 5 to 9 minutes, depending on thickness.

Nutrition facts per 1/6 serving: 386 Calories, 17.2g fat; 75mg Cholesterol; 290mg Sodium; 27.2g Carbs, 6.4g Fiber, 32.6 Protein