

# ASPARAGUS



Asparagus is in the OTHER vegetable group. It is high in folate and vitamin K and a good source of vitamin C, and vitamin A.

Asparagus is most often served steamed as a vegetable side dish. It is also wonderful served roasted, sautéed, and grilled.

## FUN FACT :

Asparagus was first grown in Greece over 2,500 years ago! It was believed in ancient times that asparagus help prevent bee stings and relieved tooth aches. Today it is eaten as a delicious vegetable. In Idaho, the asparagus harvest happens in April and May. Unlike most vegetables, asparagus is a perennial plant. That means it comes back every year without replanting. Because of that, sometimes you'll see asparagus growing wild along irrigation canals in parts of Idaho.



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Safety:	<p>Wash asparagus spears before cutting or cooking. Store it under refrigeration for 3-4 days. Sometimes asparagus is stored upright in a small amount of water. Some health inspectors find this risky, so it should be avoided in school food service. Instead, wrap cut ends in a clean damp paper towel and store in plastic.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100, ½ cup servings of cooked drained cuts &amp; tips, you need 41.8 lbs. One pound of fresh asparagus yields 2.4 servings - ½ cup.</p>
Quality:	<p>Look for closed compacted tips and smooth round spears. It should have a rich green color throughout the stalk with a firm upright body. Thick spears may be more tender than thin spears.</p>
Storage:	<p>If possible, asparagus should be stored upright, with the cut ends wrapped in a clean damp paper towel. Put in a plastic bag to maintain moisture and humidity. Keep in the coldest part of the refrigerator.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Trim off about 1 inch of the cut stem ends. Asparagus can be left as whole spears for an elegant presentation or chopped into 1" cuts for easier eating. Steam, blanch, sauté, or roast.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Asparagus is delicious plain or with seasonings. Try a little lemon juice, parmesan cheese, or a light sprinkle of garlic.</p>

