

## WHAT'S FRESH

# Asparagus

Asparagus is highly nutritious, full of body protecting antioxidants, and can be used in many different ways. It is low in calories, naturally fat free and a great source of Vitamin K. Whole asparagus is called stalks or spears.

### How to cut asparagus:

First, rinse under cool running water and pat dry. Then trim off the woody ends. Depending on how you choose to serve it, either leave it whole, chop or shred asparagus.



#### 1. Snap

Each spear will snap in the right spot if you start at the bottom end wiggle the spear with one hand closer to the top and one closer to the bottom.



#### 2. Large Chop

Cut down the length of the stalks into 2 inch sections



#### 3. Small Chop

Cut down the length of the stalk into thin slices.



#### 4. Shredded

Follow step 1 to trim stalks. Hold bottom end of stalk, use a vegetable peeler to "peel" the stalk from end to tip, making ribbon shreds.

## Try it fresh!

Add chopped asparagus to scrambled eggs, stir-fry, casseroles, soup and stews. Try adding it shredded to pasta dishes or to raw salads.

Thinly slice or shred and toss with 1 Tablespoon lemon juice and 3 Tablespoons olive oil and a pinch of salt and pepper for a quick and simple salad, mix with your favorite salad toppings.

## Did You Know?

White asparagus and green asparagus can come from the same plant. White asparagus comes from being grown in a mound of dirt so it does not have access to sunlight to make it green.

## Quick Tips:

- Seek out thicker asparagus if possible. Thin asparagus will cook in half the time of thick stalks. It is a good idea to eat very thin stalks raw.
- Store uncut asparagus upright, root end in water or wrap root end in a damp paper towel. Store in a loosely sealed bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator for up to 5 days.
- Boost asparagus flavor by adding lemon juice, garlic, fresh herbs, black pepper and light-handed on the salt.

## Ways to cook asparagus:

**Steam:** Add several inches of water to a pot with a steamer basket [or use a metal colander that will fit inside the pot]. Bring to a boil then add whole asparagus. Cover. Steam for 3-4 minutes until bright green and tender.

**Sauté:** Heat a small amount of oil or butter in a skillet over medium high heat. When hot, add asparagus and cook, stirring frequently for 3-4 minutes until bright green and crisp-tender. Add seasonings.

**Roast:** Preheat oven to 400°F. Toss whole or chopped asparagus with some oil, salt and pepper. Place in a single layer on a baking sheet. Roast for 10-15 minutes, until the stalks begin to shrivel and brown lightly. Add seasonings.

**Grill:** Toss whole spears with oil, salt and pepper. Grill for 5 minutes until lightly charred and tender. Add seasonings.

**Microwave:** Roll asparagus in a damp paper towel, or place chopped pieces in a loosely-covered dish with a tablespoon of water. Microwave on high for 3-4 minutes or until tender. Add seasonings.



## Ingredients

**Asparagus** - 1.5 lbs  
**Olive Oil** - 3 tablespoons  
**Garlic Powder** - 1/2 teaspoon  
**Salt** - 1/2 teaspoon  
**Pepper** - 1/4 teaspoon  
**Parmesan Cheese** - 1/3 cup  
**Optional:**  
**Breadcrumbs** - 1/3 cup  
 [panko or regular]

# Parmesan Roasted Asparagus

## Directions:

SERVES  
4

1. Preheat the oven to 425° F.
2. Wash asparagus under cold water and dry COMPLETELY by rolling the spears in between two kitchen towels.
3. Follow Step 1 on front to snap off the woody ends from each asparagus spear.
4. Place the asparagus spears directly on a large sheet pan. Drizzle the olive oil and sprinkle salt, garlic powder and pepper over the top. Toss until the spears are well coated.
5. Sprinkle with the (optional) breadcrumbs and 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese. Toss gently to coat all the spears.
6. Spread the asparagus into one even layer. Make sure they are not touching (otherwise you get steamed instead of roasted asparagus; separate to 2 sheet pans as needed). Sprinkle any topping that has fallen off on top of the spears.
7. Bake 7-11 minutes or until spears are lightly browned, tender and cheese is melted.
8. Enjoy immediately while hot. Top with any crispy toppings from the pan.



## Ingredients

**Asparagus** - 1 bunch  
**Oil** - 2 tablespoons  
**Whole Wheat Pasta** - 8 oz.  
**Onion** - 1/2 onion  
**Salt** - 1/4 teaspoon  
**Pepper** - 1/4 teaspoon  
**Lemon juice** - 2 tablespoons  
 [or vinegar]  
**Garlic** - 1 clove  
 [or 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder]

# Asparagus Pasta Salad

## Directions:

SERVES  
4

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and cook the pasta according to package instructions. Chop asparagus into 1-inch pieces then add to pot during the last 3 minutes of cooking. Drain and rinse with cold water.
2. While pasta cooks, drain and rinse beans, chop onion, and place in a large bowl.
3. Add pasta, asparagus, oil, vinegar/lemon juice, garlic, salt & pepper. Mix.
4. Serve chilled or at room temperature and refrigerate leftovers.