

Asparagus



Did you know?

Asparagus is a hardy perennial, which means it grows back every year. It is a member of the lily family, closely related to onions and leeks. Asparagus is one of the first vegetables ready to harvest in the spring. It is native to the Mediterranean and was eaten by ancient Greeks and Romans, who cultivated asparagus over 2,500 years ago.

ASPARAGUS

Nutrition Facts

Serving size $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, cooked

Amount Per Serving

Calories **20**

% Daily Value

Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polysaturated Fat 0g	
Monosaturated Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 15mg	1%
Total Carbohydrate 4g	1%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Total Sugars 1g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 2g	4%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 19mg	2%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 174mg	4%

*The Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

CLASSROOM RECIPE

Asparagus Appetizer

Ingredients

1 pound fresh baby asparagus (washed, trimmed at ends)
1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
6 tablespoons balsamic vinaigrette

Directions

1. Cut asparagus into one-inch pieces and place in a large bowl.
2. Add black beans to the bowl.
3. Toss asparagus and beans with the vinaigrette until coated.
4. Place 2 tablespoons on a paper tray. Serve immediately.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

HOW MUCH DO I NEED?

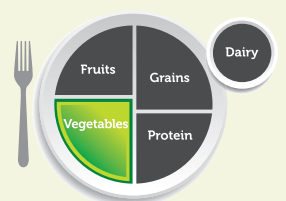
A $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cooked asparagus is about six asparagus spears. The amount of fruits and vegetables each person needs depends on age, sex and physical activity level.

Recommended Daily Amounts of Vegetables

	5 – 8 yrs	9 – 13 yrs	13 – 18 yrs
Male	1½ – 2½ cups	2 – 3½ cups	2½ – 4 cups
Female	1½ – 2½ cups	1½ – 3 cups	2½ – 3 cups

Featured Resource

At choosemyplate.gov, kids and adults can take a short quiz to learn more about their current daily nutrition habits and find resources for adjusting those habits to prioritize nutritious food based on federal dietary guidelines.



Explore Pennsylvania's Asparagus

What You Need

1 cooked spear per student and two raw spears per group*
2 cutting boards and 2 knives
Whiteboard and pens

**Pre-cook asparagus by microwaving, or coordinate with school nutrition staff to cook and bring to the classroom. Use local asparagus, if possible.*

Steps

1. Distribute 2 raw spears to each student group. Have students feel and observe one spear; identify and record the parts of the spear.
2. Have students slice and taste the second spear; record observations.
3. Have students cut the first spear crosswise and lengthwise; identify and record internal structure.
4. Distribute 1 cooked spear to each student. Discuss changes that occur as asparagus cools (e.g., smell, color, texture).
5. When cool, have students slice spears into thirds and taste the tip, center and end; record differences.
6. Poll students to find out if they prefer raw versus cooked asparagus, and if they prefer one section of the spear over another, and why.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY CORNER

Asparagus Growing Experiment

Did you know that asparagus can continue to grow even after it's cut? Conduct an experiment in the classroom to calculate how much growth the asparagus has compared to other plants.

- Measure the length of a few spears of cut asparagus and tulips, daffodils* or any other type of lily, then place them in a clear container. Make sure the bottom third of the stems are always covered with water. After about a week, measure the lengths again. Record the results.

**Asparagus is related to the lily family, which also includes tulips. Daffodils are not a true lily, but they grow in abundance during early spring, so they're a great choice for this experiment.*

CAFETERIA CONNECTION

Conduct an Asparagus Trivia Contest in the school cafeteria. Share this newsletter with school nutrition staff to create sets of trivia information, questions and answers. Here are a few ideas to get started:

- Create table tents with trivia using asparagus facts.
- Place tents on cafeteria tables.
- Create trivia questions and distribute questionnaires to students in the lunch line (or as students enter the cafeteria).
- Students find answers while eating meals (from facts on table tents) and enter their questionnaire into a drawing for prizes.



READING NOOK

Expand your lesson with these selected books about fruits and vegetables!



Alphabet Soup: A Feast of Letters

BY SCOTT GUSTAFSON
AGES 4-8



Inch by Inch: The Garden Song

BY ORA EITAN
AGES 4-8



Night of the Veggie Monster

GEORGE MCCLEMENTIS
AGES 4-7

Just the Facts

- Asparagus is in season in PA from April through June.
- While PA grows asparagus locally, the largest asparagus-producing states are California, Michigan, New Jersey and Washington.
- Asparagus is an excellent source of folate and vitamin K, and a good source of vitamin C, vitamin A and thiamin.

paharvestofthemonth.org

Sources:
Adapted from the CalFresh Healthy Living program
<https://extension.psu.edu/forage-and-food-crops/vegetables>
<https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/what-is-myplate>
<https://www.paharvestofthemonth.org/index.php/downloads>
<https://cdn.agclassroom.org/ca/resources/fusd/taste/04asparagus.pdf>



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