

Eating Local and Seasonal: Asparagus

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When asparagus starts to show up in the grocery store shelves, you know that spring is here. A previous issue of Minute Nutrition News back in May 2015 introduced the difference between green and white asparagus, and briefly discussed buying, cooking and storing asparagus. In this issue, get even more specific tips on cooking asparagus in five different ways!

Preparing Asparagus for Cooking

Wash the asparagus under cold running water. Then remove the thicker, tougher end either by bending and snapping it off, or using a knife to cut off about 3-5cm from the end. There is usually no need to peel asparagus unless the stalks are on the thicker side.



How to Roast Asparagus

Preheat oven to 400°F. Dry asparagus after washing and spread the spears evenly on baking sheet. Drizzle a tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil per bunch of asparagus used and toss to evenly coat the spears with the oil. Add a dash of salt and pepper if desired. Garlic, lemon (and juice), and grated parmesan cheese can also be added. Roast for about 15 minutes until tender (time may differ slightly depending on oven).

How to Boil Asparagus

Fill a large skillet with enough water to cover the asparagus, then cover and bring to a boil. Cook until asparagus turns tender and serve immediately. If the asparagus is not being served immediately, consider transferring it into a large bowl of ice water to stop the cooking process from the residual heat. This will keep the asparagus a bright green colour to be served later or added into other dishes such as salads. Consider using a seasoning blend (see recipe on next page) after cooking to add flavor.

How to Pan-Fry Asparagus

Drizzle extra virgin olive oil or add a pat of butter in a pan on medium high heat. Once heated, add asparagus, cooking and turning often until tender and lightly browned. Add salt and pepper as desired. Alternatively, asparagus can be added into stir-fries and pairs well with any meat, poultry or seafood of choice and other vegetables such as chives, mushrooms and peppers.

How to Steam Asparagus

Fill a medium saucepan with water and bring to a boil. Then place asparagus in a steamer overtop the boiling water. Steam for 5-10 minutes. Consider using a seasoning blend (see recipe on next page) after cooking to add flavor.

How to Grill Asparagus

Preheat the grill on high heat. Similar to roasting, dry the asparagus after washing and coat evenly with oil, salt and pepper. Since grilling can reach high cooking temperatures, use a cooking oil with a high smoke point such as avocado or canola oil. Grill the asparagus for about 2 – 3 minutes, turning it often, until tender and slightly browned. Add different flavours with ingredients previously mentioned.

Recipe of the month

May 2018

Basic Seasoned Roasted Asparagus

This seasoning mix can be used for almost anything from grilled or roasted vegetables and meats, to salads and dressings, to mixed dishes like pasta. Make a big batch and keep it in a jar for all your seasoning needs. In this recipe, the seasoning adds a nice final touch to some deliciously roasted asparagus that is in season this month.



Makes 2 servings

Ingredients:

1 bunch	Asparagus
1 tbsp	Extra virgin olive oil
As desired	Ground black pepper
1 tbsp	Dried minced onion
2 tsp	Dried minced garlic
1 tsp	Sesame seeds
1 tsp	Black sesame seeds
1 tsp	Poppyseeds
½ tsp	Sea salt flakes or coarse kosher salt

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Spread asparagus onto baking sheet. Add extra virgin olive oil and ground black pepper and mix until asparagus is coated evenly with oil. Roast for about 10 minutes.
3. Meanwhile in a small bowl, add and mix together minced onion, minced garlic, sesame seeds, black sesame seeds, poppyseeds and salt.
4. Remove asparagus from oven and sprinkle seasoning mix all over. Place asparagus back into oven and cook for additional 5-10 minutes until tender.

Nutrition Tip: For individuals on a low sodium diet, consider omitting or reducing the amount of salt added into seasoning mix. There will still be lots of flavor coming from the other seasoning ingredients.

Nutrition information (per serving):

170 calories, Fat 9.5g (15% DV), Carbohydrate 19g (6% DV), Fibre 8g (32%), Sugars 8g, Protein 9g, Sodium 490mg (20% DV), Calcium 15% DV, Iron 58%