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ASPARAGUS

Composition

EXCELLENT SOURCE OF: vitamin K, folate

GOOD SOURCE OF: iron

SOURCE OF: fiber, vitamins A, B₁, B₂, B₃, B₆, C and vitamin E (when boiled), copper, manganese, potassium, selenium (when boiled)

Asparagus contains tryptophan.





In ancient times, asparagus was attributed with many medicinal properties. It was used to cure all sorts of illnesses, from rheumatism to toothaches. These days it is thought to be a purifying agent, a diuretic and sometimes even an aphrodisiac.

VIRTUES

Improving mood

Asparagus ranks fifth among foods for folate content. Studies suggest a correlation between eating plenty of food rich in folate and a reduced risk of depression. According to the findings from a Harvard University study, 38% of women with depression have a folate deficiency. Plus, folate may reinforce the effect of antidepressants.

Encouraging well-being

Eating asparagus may have a positive influence on mood, appetite and sleep, because it is a source not only of tryptophan (an amino acid), but also of vitamins, which together promote the secretion of serotonin (see *The Chemistry of Happiness*, p. 10).

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Five cooked asparagus meet about 25% of daily folate needs for the general population.
- Cooking, canning or freezing vegetables reduces their folate content.
- The vitamins and minerals are particularly concentrated in the tips of asparagus.
- Green asparagus are richer in vitamins and minerals than white ones, which grow underground, never seeing the sun. This is why they do not turn green.

BUYING AND STORING

- The stalk must be firm, easy to snap and dry at the end, and the tip must be a nice color, tightly closed and compact. Do not choose asparagus with grayish ends.
- Raw asparagus doesn't keep well: keep it in bundles, wrapped in a damp paper towel in a plastic bag. Place it in the vegetable crisper in the refrigerator. To make the most of its nutrients, eat it soon after buying, because it quickly becomes woody.

HOW TO EAT IT

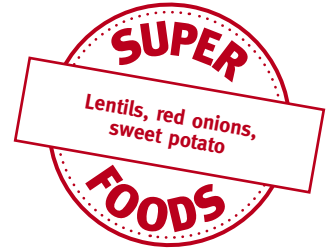
Raw: cut in thin strips and served with vinaigrette.

Cooked: boiled, steamed (served hot or cold with a vinaigrette or sauce), roasted in the oven (served with olive oil, garlic and lemon), in soup, risottos, frittatas, sautés, quiches or vegetable muffins.



LENTIL AND SWEET POTATO SOUP

4 SERVINGS
20 MINUTES
20 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 **red onions**, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, in rounds
- 1 **sweet potato**, peeled and cubed
- 6 cups (1.5 liters) chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 can (19 oz/540 ml) **lentils**, drained and rinsed
- ½ tsp curry powder
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- Seasoning to taste

METHOD

In a large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat and sauté onions, garlic, carrots and sweet potato for 3 to 5 minutes.

Add broth, lentils and curry. Reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer for 12 to 15 minutes.

Add parsley and season.

DID YOU KNOW?

Legumes can help you lose weight. They are nourishing, filling and high in protein and fiber, but low in fat.

Nutrition Facts Per serving	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 230	
Fat 4 g	6%
Saturated 0.5 g	
+ Trans 0 g	
Polyunsaturated 0.5 g	
Omega-6 0.5 g	
Omega-3 0.1 g	
Monounsaturated 2.5 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	0%
Sodium 150 mg	6%
Potassium 910 mg	26%
Carbohydrates 37 g	12%
Fiber 6 g	24%
Sugar 10 g	
Protein 11 g	
Vitamin A 963 ER	100%
Vitamin C 12 mg	20%
Calcium 62 mg	6%
Iron 3.3 mg	25%
Phosphorus 194.6 mg	20%