

ASPARAGUS

Selection Info

Look for bright green asparagus. The stems should be crisp and firm and should snap (not bend) when bend them. Look for dark green spear tips that have a hint of purple, which shows freshness. Avoid asparagus with yellow or dry tips (these indicate old asparagus).

Preparation

Rinse asparagus under a stream of cool water and snap off the bottoms at their natural breaking point. Discard the bottoms or use them in vegetable stock. Most edible portions are 7-9 inches long. You can microwave, boil, steam, sauté, roast, or grill asparagus. Do not overcook; asparagus is best when still crisp.

Microwave: Cut spears into bite-size pieces and place in a microwave safe bowl with ½ cup water. Cover and cook on high at 1 minute intervals until bright green and just tender.

Steam: Fill a saucepan with about 1 inch of water and insert steamer basket. Bring water to a boil, and put asparagus into the steamer. Steam for about 5-7 minutes until bright green and crisp.

Boil: Bring a large pot of water to a boil with 2 teaspoons of salt. Immerse the asparagus in the water and blanch for 2 ½-3 minutes. The asparagus should

be crisp and bright green. Serve hot or plunge into cold water to stop the cooking process.

Sauté: Heat 1 tablespoon of oil or butter in a saucepan on medium to high heat. Add the cut asparagus or whole spears to the pan. Sauté until bright green.

Roast: Heat oven to 400°F. Lay asparagus flat on an oven safe baking sheet or pan and drizzle with olive oil (about 2 tablespoons). Season with salt and pepper or your favorite seasoning to taste. Roast for 12 minutes.

Grill: Cut asparagus as desired and place in large bowl. Add 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil, and toss to coat each piece. Add seasoning to taste. Place on a hot grill for about 90 seconds on each side.

Storage

Short-Term Storage: Store asparagus in an upright container filled with water or in the refrigerator in a plastic bag with a damp paper towel. Asparagus will last up to about 5 days in the refrigerator.

Do not use asparagus if the tips are slimy, yellow, soft, or rotten.

Long-Term Storage: Asparagus can be frozen or pickled. To freeze, blanch or steam asparagus for 30 seconds in boiling water then plunge into cold water for 5 minutes. Dry the asparagus with a lint-free towel. Put into freezer bags and store up to 3-4 months in a freezer.



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ASPARAGUS AND SHRIMP QUINOA SALAD WITH LEMON VINAIGRETTE

Ingredients

For the vinaigrette

- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel (optional)
- 3 tablespoons fresh or bottled lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

For the salad

- 2 cups fresh asparagus (cut large spears into 1-inch pieces)
- 1/2 yellow or red sweet pepper (cut into 1/2-inch pieces)
- 1 clove garlic (minced)
- 1 14-ounce can quartered artichoke hearts (drained)
- 12 ounces fresh or frozen large raw shrimp (peeled and deveined)
- 1 1/2 cups dry quinoa (cooked according to package directions)

Directions

1. Place all the vinaigrette ingredients in a small bowl and whisk. Set aside.
2. Cut vegetables.
3. Heat grill and grilling tray.
4. Place vegetables and shrimp in a large bowl. Add about 1/3 of the vinaigrette to the bowl (about 3 tablespoons) and toss.
5. Spread shrimp-vegetable mixture over hot grilling tray.
6. Grill, turning shrimp and vegetables, until the flesh of the shrimp is opaque color (about 5-6 minutes). Remove from grill.
7. Serve grill mixture over cooked quinoa, and drizzle with remaining vinaigrette.



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Nutrition Information

Serving Size	1/4 of recipe	
Nutrients	Amount	% Daily Value
Protein	33g	
Carbohydrates	52g	17
Dietary Fiber	7g	28
Total Sugars	6g	
Cholesterol	125mg	42
Minerals		
Calcium	200mg	20
Sodium	570mg	24
Iron	6.3 mg	35
Vitamins		
Vitamin A	96mcg RAE	
Vitamin C	54mg	90