



ASPARAGUS

Cafeteria Connection

Tell Me about Asparagus

It takes three years for asparagus plants to grow from seed to mature spears that are ready for harvest. The plants can live at least 25 years but have been known to live up to 100! In Washington state, asparagus season is only a few months long—April through June—but begins earlier than many other seasonal produce items, making it a great option for early spring menus. It can be green, purple, or white.

Crediting Information

- Asparagus, whether fresh, canned or frozen, credits toward the vegetable meal pattern component by volume served. For example, 1/2 cup asparagus credits a 1/2 cup vegetable.
- Vegetables must be fresh, frozen, canned, or full-strength vegetable juice, referred to as 100% juice, to credit as a vegetable component. Dried vegetables, including beans, peas, and lentils, must be reconstituted to credit toward reimbursable meals. Please confirm crediting requirements for dried vegetables with your specialist.



Nutrition Facts

Asparagus is rich in many vitamins, including Vitamin C and B9 (Folate)¹. These vitamins support healing, cell growth, and maintenance of healthy skin, gums, and immune function. It also has high fiber content, which aids in digestion and blood sugar regulation and helps maintain a healthy heart.



Selection and Storage

When selecting asparagus, choose odorless, brightly colored, firm stalks with dry, compact tips. Spear diameter doesn't affect flavor, texture, or tenderness, although thinner spears will cook faster than thicker ones. Store asparagus in the refrigerator for up to three days.

Culinary Tips

- To prepare asparagus, rinse under cool water, then remove woody ends of stems. Spears can be cooked whole or sliced into smaller sections.
- Asparagus is versatile and can be steamed, roasted, sauteed, pickled, or stir-fried.
- Asparagus cooks quickly and is easy to overcook. When possible, plan to batch cook just before each mealtime begins and avoid holding in warming cabinet for long periods.

Recipes

- [Marinated Chicken and Asparagus Wrap Pennsylvania Recipe for Schools](#)
- [Spicy Summer Harvest Pasta Pennsylvania Recipe for Schools](#)

Sourcing

- [Find asparagus Wholesale Finder | Washington State Wholesalers](#)
- [Find asparagus Washington Asparagus Commission](#)



Asparagus at the Farmers Market, credit: WSDA



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