

SNACK FACTS

Don't forget to wash your hands before you eat!
Handwashing is one of the simplest and best ways to stay healthy and prevent spreading germs.

ASPARAGUS

Relatives: onions, leeks and garlic

Is asparagus grown in Ontario?

- YES!
- The most popular variety in Ontario is called Millenium.

The asparagus sent to your school was grown in Langton, Ontario

When is asparagus grown?

- Ontario asparagus peaks in the spring around May and June.

How is asparagus used?

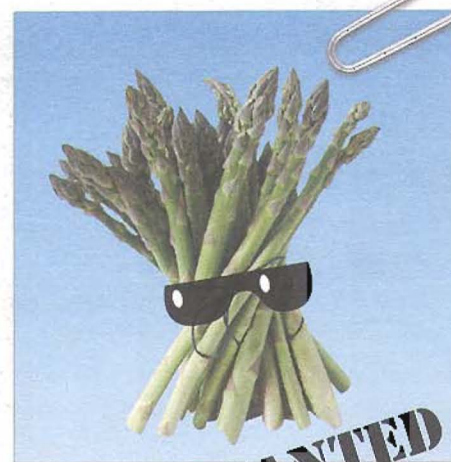
- In omelettes, salads, soups and appetizers
- As a pizza topping
- As a nutritious side dish with dinner

Did you know?

- Asparagus is an excellent source of folate and Vitamin K as well as a source of: fibre, Vitamins A, C, and Thiamin (Vitamin B1) and minerals like potassium, magnesium, manganese, selenium, iron and copper.
- Asparagus can be either white or green.
- Fresh asparagus should be firm.

Tip: Old asparagus is rubbery, not firm

ASPARAGUS



Vegetables and fruit contain vitamins, minerals, fibre and belong to five different colour groups: red, yellow-orange, green, blue-purple, and white-tan-brown.

Asparagus belongs to the green colour group:

- Green vegetables and fruit contain special compounds called *phytochemicals* like *lutein* which may help maintain vision and *indoles* that may reduce the risk of some cancers.

Reference: *Paint Your Plate! Create a Masterpiece Vegetable and Fruit Action Guide for Schools*. Northern Healthy Eating Project. 2006.



Paint your plate.
Create a masterpiece.

Students:

- Do you know where Langton, Ontario is? Can you find it on a map? (Answer on back)

Parents:

- Why not try out a new recipe, like the one on the back of this sheet?

Teachers:

- For ideas on how to make vegetables and fruit come alive in your class, refer to *Paint Your Plate! Create a Masterpiece Vegetable and Fruit Action Guide for Schools*.



SNACK FACTS

Preparing your vegetables and fruit the smart way

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide recommends that you choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt. To do this, follow these helpful tips:

Shopping tips:

- Compare Nutrition Facts labels to choose canned, packaged or frozen vegetables and fruit with less fat, sodium and sugar;
- Choose frozen or canned fruit that is unsweetened or packed in juice; and
- Check ingredient lists to avoid products with these words listed as one of the main ingredients: corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, glucose, malt syrup, invert sugar and concentrated fruit juice.

Cooking tips:

- Steam or microwave vegetables;
- Use small amounts of oils such as canola or olive; and
- Try dried herbs, spices, flavoured vinegars or lemon juice to add flavour.

Tips for eating out:

- Order salad dressing on the side and use sparingly;
- Choose a baked potato or salad instead of French fries; and
- Avoid the salt shaker and try pepper instead.

Source: *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide: A Resource for Educators and Communicators*. Health Canada. 2007

Where is... Langton, Ontario?

Langton is a small town in Norfolk County, Ontario near Lake Erie.



Mediterranean Asparagus and Tomato

Simple is often the best treatment! This can be doubled or tripled and served at an early summer buffet or barbecue. It's wonderful with all grilled meats.



- 2 tbsp (30 mL) red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp (5 mL) Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp (5 mL) liquid honey
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) each salt and dried basil
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) olive oil
- 1 lb (500 g) Ontario asparagus
- 1 ripe Ontario tomato, diced
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) freshly grated Parmesan or Asiago cheese
- Fresh basil leaves (optional)

1. In small bowl, whisk together vinegar, mustard, honey, salt, basil and pepper; slowly whisk in oil until smooth. Set aside.
2. Break asparagus. In large pot of boiling water, cook asparagus until bright green and tender-crisp, 2 to 4 minutes (depending on thickness of stalk). Drain and chill under cold water. Drain well and place in shallow dish.
3. Sprinkle tomato over asparagus. Pour vinaigrette over top and shake dish to coat. Let stand at room temperature for up to 1 hour. Garnish each serving with Parmesan and fresh basil leaves (if using).

Serves 4

Source: *Foodland Ontario*, 2007

Remember:

Try to make healthy eating and physical activity a part of your daily routine.



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