

# RECIPE for health

MAY 2008 In partnership with Health4U and University Housing

Featured Food:

## ASPARAGUS



Asparagus is popping up with all the other spring flowers. That's right, asparagus is a member of the lily family. As such, it takes its rightful place as a sign that spring has sprung! Asparagus spears are actually the shoots of an underground crown. It takes about three years for the crowns to develop enough to begin producing shoots. Once they do, they're productive for as long as 20 years.

### Asparagus tips

• **Shopping** | Buy asparagus fresh, frozen or canned. Fresh asparagus can be found in supermarkets year-round. The harvest season in Michigan is late April through mid- to late June. When buying fresh asparagus, look for firm spears with closed, compact tips and uniform diameter, so all the spears will cook in the same amount of time. Larger diameter spears are more tender and hold up well when pan roasting or stir-frying.

• **Cleaning and storing** | For fresh asparagus: trim the stem ends about one-quarter inch. Wash spears several times in warm water. Pat dry. Wrap a moist paper towel around the stem ends or stand upright in an inch or two of cold water. Cover and refrigerate. Use within two or three days for best quality. For frozen asparagus: keep frozen until ready to cook.

• **Cooking** | Keep the volume of water low. No matter what the cooking container or method is, steam and short cooking time are keys to bright green, tender-crisp asparagus.

A common aftermath of eating asparagus is a peculiar urine odor. The odor is caused by the breakdown of amino acids present in asparagus. Considering the wide array of valuable nutrients that asparagus delivers, this harmless and fleeting side effect is a small price to pay.

## Roasted Fresh Asparagus

*from the kitchen of the MSU Residence Halls*

*Serves 6*

- 1 ½ pounds fresh asparagus
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic
- Salt and pepper to taste

Pre-heat oven to 375° F. Wash asparagus and cut off ends. Combine garlic and oil in large bowl. Add asparagus; toss in oil and put on baking sheet. Roast in oven for approximately 10 minutes until tender, but still firm. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

### Other Serving Suggestions:

- Drizzle lemon juice over steamed asparagus tips.
- Grill by skewering spears at top and bottom on bamboo picks to make a "raft." Brush with oil and place on pre-heated grill.
- Use up those trimmings—peel the tough stem pieces; steam, then purée them to use in soup.
- Stir-fry—cut asparagus spears diagonally into one- to two-inch pieces keeping tips whole. Heat one to two tablespoons oil in skillet until oil shimmers; add asparagus pieces and stir-fry until just tender.
- Steam spears lightly then chill—add to other fresh vegetables on a crudité tray served with a favorite dip.

Roasted Fresh Asparagus will be featured in the MSU Residence Hall Dining Rooms at lunch on Thursday, May 1. Once you try this delectable dish, you'll want to make it at home! Enjoy. For meal hours and complete menus, visit [eatatstate.com](http://eatatstate.com).

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