



# Gourmet Asparagus

## A Gift of Taste...

The "Patrician" status of asparagus dates back to Aristotle, Nero and Cato who all favored tender wild spears. Asparagus has always been in a class by itself. Today, Mister Spear is simply the most succulent asparagus available anywhere.

To "catch" the delicate fresh-as-morning flavor, Mister Spear hand-picks its crop early in the morning and rushes the spears through a cold water wash to clean **and** cool them. Fresh asparagus orders are delivered in specially designed gift packs to ensure freshness and quality.

Properly handled, Mister Spear asparagus will stay fresh for seven to ten days after delivery.



Mister Spear has included some recipes direct from the kitchen of Marilyn Harris, acclaimed radio personality, columnist, food consultant and cooking teacher in Cincinnati Ohio.

For more recipes from Marilyn check out her cookbook, "Live! from Marilyn's Kitchen" available at Amazon.com or get in touch with her at mmharris@cinci.rr.com.

## Asparagus & Shrimp Salad with Citrus Vinaigrette

Serves 8 from the kitchen of Marilyn Harris

2 pounds MISTER SPEAR Asparagus  
 1 pound large boiled, peeled and deveined shrimp  
 3 hard-cooked eggs  
 ½ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley  
 1 teaspoon finely chopped lemon zest  
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
 1 recipe Citrus Vinaigrette\*  
 Crisp lettuce leaves

Wash the asparagus and cut off about 2 inches from the ends. Place, upright in a pitcher of ice water and allow to sit for 30 minutes.

Peel and sieve the eggs and stir in the lemon zest and parsley. Season with salt and pepper.

Cook the asparagus: In a large non-reactive skillet boil just enough water to cover the asparagus. Add some salt. Lay the asparagus in the boiling water. Cover with 2 layers of white paper towels. Simmer for 4 to 5 minutes or until the asparagus is "crisp tender." Remove immediately to ice water and chill. Pat dry with paper towels.

To assemble the salad: Place lettuce leaves on a plate (either a large serving plate or on individual plates). Arrange the asparagus on the lettuce. Top with 3 or 4 shrimp. Sprinkle over the egg mixture. Just before serving drizzle with the dressing.

## Citrus Vinaigrette

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar  
 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
 1 tablespoon fresh orange juice  
 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
 1 teaspoon honey  
 ½ teaspoon fine sea salt

Whisk together until well blended or blend in the blender.

Makes about 2/3 cup. Note: Always dress asparagus salad with an acidic dressing just before serving. The acid will cause the beautiful green color to fade to a dull green.

## Ham & Asparagus Gougere

Serves 6 to 8 from the kitchen of Marilyn Harris

A spring brunch dish that looks elegant and tastes delicious. A great way to use up the leftover Easter ham.

### THE PASTRY

1 cup water  
 1 stick butter, cut into 8 pieces  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 1 cup all-purpose flour  
 4 large eggs  
 ½ cup shredded Swiss cheese

Place the water, butter and salt in a small saucepan. Bring to a rolling boil and boil until the butter is melted. Stir in the flour, all at once, and stir vigorously until the mixture forms a ball of dough that leaves the sides of the pan. Allow to cool for 5 minutes. Put into the food processor with the steel blade and add the eggs. Process until the mixture is shiny and sticky. Add the cheese and blend in.

Grease a 10" round baking dish and spoon the pastry in a ring around the edge. Make the following filling and spoon into the center. Top with the 1 cup of cheese.

Bake in the center of a preheated 400 °F oven for 45 minutes or until the pastry is puffed and golden brown. Garnish with chopped parsley and serve hot.

### THE FILLING

1 pound Mister Spear Asparagus  
 4 tablespoons butter  
 1 large onion, halved & thinly sliced  
 8 oz. fresh mushrooms, thinly sliced  
 2 tablespoons flour  
 ½ cup chicken broth, heated  
 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley  
 ½ cup light cream or whole milk  
 1 tablespoon dry sherry  
 Salt, to taste  
 Generous dash of hot pepper sauce  
 2 cups cubed cooked ham  
 1 cup shredded Swiss cheese

Cut about 2 inches off the ends of the asparagus spears. Stand upright in a pitcher of ice water for 30 minutes. Wash and cut on the diagonal into 1" pieces. Steam for about 2 minutes or until "crisp tender." Set aside.

Melt the butter in a large heavy skillet. Sauté the onion for about 2 minutes, stirring. Add the mushrooms and cook over high heat, stirring, for 3 to 4 minutes.

Reduce the heat to medium and stir in the flour. Cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes without browning. Whisk in the heated chicken broth and cook until thickened. Whisk in the cream and sherry and stir until smooth. Season to taste with salt and hot pepper sauce. Remove from the heat and fold in the ham and asparagus.

Spoon into the center of the pastry and follow the above directions.

# Important... Read Carefully Upon Receipt!

Inspect your asparagus for any damage that may have occurred while in transit. Our shipping box is designed to prevent this but anything is possible. Should there be a problem, notify MISTER SPEAR immediately by calling 1-800-MRSPEAR.

“FRESHENING” – As soon as possible, remove spears from package and soak in ice water (approximately 30 minutes). Drain thoroughly, pat lightly with a soft towel to remove excess drops of water. Refrigerate tips up, in a shallow bowl of water or wrap in a damp paper towel and store in a cloth or plastic vegetable bag.

Should you need additional information please phone (800) 677-7327, fax (209) 463-2102, or write to: MISTER SPEAR, P.O. Box 1768, Stockton, CA 95201.

## How to Cook Asparagus

from the kitchen of Marilyn Harris

**Lemon Asparagus** Serves 4 to 6  
2 pounds Mister Spear Asparagus ½ stick (2 ounces) unsalted butter  
Water 3 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

To rehydrate the asparagus: Cut about 2 inches from the end of the asparagus spears. Place in a pitcher of iced water for at least 30 min. Bring 3” of water to a boil in a large skillet. Lay the spears down in the boiling water. Cover with parchment paper. Cook about 5 minutes, or until “crisp tender” when checked with a fork. Remove with tongs to a warmed platter. Melt the butter and add the lemon juice. Season the asparagus with salt and pepper to taste. Just before serving pour over the butter mixture. Serve hot.

### Steamed Asparagus

Cut off 2 inches from the tough ends of 1 to 2 pounds Mister Spear Asparagus. Rehydrate, as explained in the Lemon Asparagus recipe. Bundle together with a band of foil or kitchen twine. Stand upright in a tall pot (asparagus steamer) with 2 to 3 inches of boiling water in the bottom. Cover with a lid and steam for 5 to 7 minutes or until “crisp tender.” Remove from the steamer to prevent overcooking. Serve hot or cold.

### Grilled Asparagus

Serves 4 to 6  
2 pounds Mister Spear Asparagus Kosher Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper (if desired) Extra-virgin olive oil  
Cut 2 inches from the ends of the asparagus and rehydrate as explained in previous recipe. Place in a shallow dish and add enough olive oil to lightly coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

## Penne with Asparagus, Tomatoes & Fresh Mozzarella Cheese

1 pound MISTER SPEAR asparagus Serves 6-8  
2 pounds ripe tomatoes 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
1 pound fresh Mozzarella balls ½ teaspoon salt  
2 cloves garlic, crushed freshly ground pepper to taste  
¼ cup freshly snipped parsley 1 pound penne or similar pasta

Trim asparagus and cut diagonally into 1-1½- inch pieces. Steam for 4 to 5 minutes until just barely tender. Reserve.  
Cut tomatoes into small cubes and place in a large serving bowl. Cut cheese into similar-sized cubes. Add cheese, garlic, parsley, olive oil, salt, pepper and asparagus to bowl, mix gently, and set aside at room temperature for about an hour to blend flavors.  
Boil water for pasta, adding 1 tablespoon each of oil and salt. Cook penne according to package directions until al dente.  
Drain and toss at once with asparagus-tomato sauce. Serve immediately.

## Batter-Fried Asparagus

1 to 2 pounds fresh MISTER SPEAR asparagus Serves 2-6  
½ cup cornstarch  
2 tsp. baking powder 1 tsp. salt  
½ cup flour 1 egg  
2 tsp. white sugar 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil

Wash asparagus and cut in 2-inch pieces. Mix together dry ingredients. Add egg and mix. Add oil and mix. **Do not beat with electric mixer!** Add enough ice water to make ingredients the consistency of pancake batter.

## Chilled Asparagus with Lemon Dressing

from the kitchen of Marilyn Harris

Follow cooking directions in the recipe for Lemon Asparagus or for Steamed Asparagus. Remove the cooked asparagus from the water with tongs and place directly in ice water. Remove from ice water as soon as it is chilled and place on paper towels to dry. Use the following recipe as a dip for an appetizer or as a dressing for an asparagus salad. Place the spears (or 2” pieces cut on the diagonal) on crisp lettuce leaves and top with the Lemon Dressing. For a heartier appetizer wrap each chilled spear in a very thin slice of prosciutto and serve with the dressing for dipping. Cook on a hot grill for 12 to 15 min. or until lightly browned but still “crisp tender.”  
**Alternate method Roasted Asparagus:** follow same recipe as grilled asparagus but place in a shallow baking pan and roast in a preheated 450 °F. oven for 12 to 15 minutes.

### EASY LEMON DRESSING

1 cup mayonnaise  
½ cup non-fat yogurt  
2 tablespoons finely chopped sweet onion (or scallion)  
1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh lemon zest  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
2 teaspoons honey  
½ teaspoon hot pepper sauce  
½ teaspoon fine sea salt  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill  
Gently stir together all ingredients until blended.  
Note: Also delicious on chilled artichokes.  
Makes about 1½ cups.

## Nutritional Value

Asparagus is ideal for those concerned with nutrition and diet. It is low in calories, very low in sodium, a good source of potassium and a source of dietary fiber.

### Nutrient Values

Serving Size: 5.3 ounces (150 grams)

Calories	20
Protein	3 g
Carbohydrates	3 g
Fat	0 g
Cholesterol**	0 mg
Sodium	5 mg
Potassium	400 mg
Dietary Fiber	3g
Protein	6%
Vitamin A	8%
Vitamin C	20%
Thiamin	15%
Riboflavin (B2)	6%
Niacin	6%
Calcium	2%
Iron	*
Vitamin E	*
Vitamin B6	10%
Folicin	60%
Magnesium	4%
Copper	6%
Pantothenic Acid	*

\*Contains less than 2% of the U.S. RDA of this nutrient.  
\*\*Information on cholesterol content is provided for individuals who, on the advice of a physician, are modifying their dietary intake of cholesterol.

Source: Produce Marketing Association

## Fresh Cream of Asparagus Soup

from the kitchen of Marilyn Harris

1 pound Mister Spear Asparagus Serves 6 to 8  
3 tablespoons butter  
1 cup chopped onion  
3 tablespoons flour  
5 cups chicken stock  
1 cup heavy cream  
Salt, to taste  
¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg  
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley

Cut off about 2 inches from tough end of the asparagus spears. Cut the tips from the tender ends and set aside.  
Cut the spears into small pieces  
Melt the butter in a large heavy pot.  
Sauté the onion, stirring, for 3 to 4 minutes or until softened.  
Stir in the flour and cook over medium heat, stirring, for 2 minutes. Do not brown.  
Whisk in the broth.  
Add the cut up asparagus spears and cook, partially covered, for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the asparagus tips in a small amount of lightly salted water in the microwave for 2 minutes.  
Drain and set aside.  
Puree the cooked soup in a blender and return to the pot. (Or use a hand-held emersion blender in the pot.) Reheat to boiling and whisk in the cream. Do not boil after the cream is added.  
Season with salt, hot pepper sauce and nutmeg.  
Put the cooked tips into the soup.  
Sprinkle each bowl with the chopped parsley.