Cooking with Asparagus



Asparagus is a low-calorie source of folate and potassium, and its stalks are high in antioxidants. Asparagus is high in roughly half the recommended daily intake of folate, a key nutrient in taming homocysteine, a substance implicated in heart disease, and is also high in potassium. Several studies indicate getting plenty of potassium may reduce the loss of calcium from the body. In addition, green asparagus is a good source of vitamin C, which helps the body produce and maintain collagen, the major structural protein component of the body's connective tissues. As if that weren’t enough, asparagus also contains substances that act as a diuretic, neutralize ammonia that causes fatigue, and protect small blood vessels from rupturing.

# Asparagus and Apple Mixed Greens

[Adapted from a recipe by Anne Graziano, that appeared in Bon Appétit, June 2000 issue]

24 thin asparagus stalks

1 tablespoon plus 1/3 cup olive oil or grape seed oil

1/4 cup rice vinegar or balsamic vinegar

2 tablespoons honey

1 garlic clove, minced

10-ounces mixed baby greens

1 Golden Delicious apple, quartered, cored, diced

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. and trim ends of asparagus stalks in preparation.

2. Place asparagus on baking sheet, with no overlap.

3. Drizzle lightly with 1 tablespoon olive or grape-seed oil, then sprinkle with salt and pepper, and rosemary.

4. Roast 30 minutes, turning once, then remove from oven.

5. While asparagus cools for 5 minutes, blend together remaining 1/3 cup oil, vinegar, honey and garlic in small bowl.

6. Place greens in large bowl and toss with vinaigrette from small bowl.

7. Spoon small heap of salad on each of 8 plates, top with diced apple.

8. Finally, arrange asparagus attractively on top and serve chilled.

Yields 8 servings.