



What is it ?

Asparagus is a distant cousin of the leek. It is a green vegetable that grows as a stalk.

Varieties :

Asparagus can have three different colours: green, white or violet. The difference in colour is a function of where it is grown. White: It is grown in the shade, and underground.

Violet: White asparagus that comes out of the ground and is exposed to the sun until it changes colour.

Green: It is grown in full sun.

Impressive, huh ?

Asparagus is one of the first vegetables to be harvested every spring in Canada.



When can it be eaten ?

Fresh: Mid-May to end of June

Frozen or canned: Year-round

Discovering the

ASPARAGUS



How can asparagus be eaten ?



Raw

crudité

salad

Cooked

Steamed

baked

in an omelette

with pasta

in a quiche

Where is asparagus grown ?

The Canadian provinces where asparagus is grown are Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia.

Quebec asparagus is only eaten fresh. It is not canned or frozen.



Did you know ?



The bottom of the stalk can be very fibrous. It is therefore best to remove it prior to cooking. You can do so by snapping off the bottom of the asparagus with your hands. You can also peel it before cooking. Dunk the asparagus in ice water after cooking to keep its bright green colour. Otherwise, the asparagus can turn olive green in colour.



CONTINUE YOUR EXPLORATION OF THE ASPARAGUS

Actively challenge your campers, test their knowledge and discover all of this veggie's secrets.

Asparagus yoga

Duration : 10 minutes

Description : Take a moment to relax with your campers. Stand up straight like an asparagus stalk (upright, arms reaching for the sky, palms together to form the pointy tip of the asparagus). Focus on your breathing. Asparagus can be freshly picked, in which case it will be quite rigid (the body is straight), or it can be overcooked (the body is limp).

Do you know me ?



Duration : 5-10 minutes

1. How is white asparagus grown in the shade ?

- a) It is grown in a shadier part of a field.
- b) It grows underground and is harvested as soon as it pokes out of the ground.
- c) Each asparagus has its own little umbrella to protect it from the sun.

Answer : b)

2. Which kind of asparagus has a milder taste and is less fibrous than the others ?

- a) White asparagus
- b) Green asparagus
- c) Violet asparagus

Answer : a)

3. How should asparagus be stored ?

- a) On the counter
- b) In the refrigerator
- c) In the pantry

Answer : b)

4. How long is asparagus when it is harvested ?

* Use your fingers to show your campers the approximate length of an asparagus.

- a) 5 to 10 cm
- b) 10 to 15 cm
- c) 15 to 20 cm

Answer : c)

Asparagus jump



Duration : 15-20 minutes

Objective : The campers must jump as far as possible into sand-filled bins, keeping their feet together and their arms along their body.

Materials : Large bins filled with sand, a tape measure, starting lines, paper, crayon

Step 1 : Divide your group into two or three teams.

Step 2 : Set up the bins filled with sand.

Step 3 : Have each team position themselves behind the starting line. At your signal, the first camper in line on each team jumps into the sand-filled bin. Note the distance spanned by each camper. * Each camper takes two jumps, and the best of the two jumps is counted.

Step 4 : Add up the length of each camper's best jump to determine the cumulative length spanned by each team. The winning team is the one that spans the greatest distance.

Variation : Cooked asparagus jump : The campers must bend the knees slightly when they jump.



Nourish your expressiveness

Power Up challenges you to use the following expression : "Boy, it's hot! Aspara-spray yourself with water!" Ask your campers to count the number of times you use the expression. At the end of the day, the camper who guesses right wins the game.



CONTINUE YOUR EXPLORATION OF THE ASPARAGUS

It's time for a taste test !

Taste it !



Duration : 30 minutes

Objective : Use the five senses to explore asparagus in all its forms with your campers.

Materials : One cooked asparagus* and one raw asparagus per camper, one pair of tongs to distribute the asparagus, and one knife.

* Bring 1 L of water to a boil on high heat. Boil the asparagus for five minutes, drain it, and immediately place it in a bowl of ice water. Drain it again.



Examine them with your eyes

- Do you observe a difference in colour between the two asparagus stems ?
- What differences do you observe between the inside and the outside when you cut them in half ?
- Does the colour remind you of another fruit or vegetable ?
- Do you find them appetizing ? Which one do you most want to bite into ?



Explore them with your hands

- What do you think of their shape ? Is it uniform ? What does it make you think of ?
- How would you describe its texture (smooth, soft, coarse, etc.) ?



Recognize them through their smell

- Do you like the way they smell ? Why ?
- What exactly do they smell like (woody, floral, fresh, mild, etc.) ?
- What does the smell make you think of (a place, a time, a celebration, a person) ?



Its sound

- Have you listened to the sound asparagus makes when you bite into it? Can you describe it ?
- Is the sound faint or distinct? Is it similar to the sound you hear when you bite into a water melon or a carrot ?



Explore them with your mouth

Their taste

- Do you like the taste ? Why ?
- Describe the taste of asparagus in one word.
- Does the smell of asparagus reflect its taste ?
- Does its taste remind you of any other foods ?

Tastes

- Sweet: like candy
- Bitter: like grapefruit
- Acidic: like lemon
- Salty: like salt

Texture inside the mouth

- Can you find one word to describe its texture inside the mouth ?
- What do you like or dislike about its texture ?
- Can you compare asparagus to any other foods you've eaten ?

Textures

- Crunchy like an apple
- Juicy like an orange
- Pasty like a banana
- Crispy like a cracker
- Fibrous like celery

Don your aprons !

Ready, set, cook !

Visit www.treplinsante.ca

to view recipes featuring asparagus :

- Asparagus quiche
- Asparagus salad



For the curious

Did you know that asparagus contains a molecule that causes human urine to smell funny ? The molecule is called asparagusic acid.



For additional ideas on words to use to taste foods with the senses, please refer to the [Tasting Expert](#) activity on the PU portal.

