

Cooking in the Gesundheit Kitchen with Chef Hans Rueffert

Episode 32: Spring Asparagus Salad with Lemon Yogurt Dressing

From Chef Hans: Asparagus is nutritious, delicious, inexpensive and easy to prepare. It's low in calories and a great source of nutrients, including fiber, folate and vitamins A, C and K.

I planted asparagus in my modest vegetable/herb/fruit garden several years ago, and it has finally started paying off. Every Spring I anxiously wait for the kelly-green asparagus shoots to break through ground and reward me with a dozen or so crisp stalks of deliciousness. For me, it's not the calendar, but the asparagus that marks the beginning of Spring and it brings me joy each and every year.

My German family members primarily eat white asparagus, which is the same plant that's been sheltered from sunlight under tall mounds of soil. The entire nation seems to become truly obsessed with "Spargel," eating them for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and even snacks in between. Perhaps my innate love for asparagus is genetic and tied to that German spring Spargle fever.

These days we are fortunate that we can enjoy the flavor and nutritional benefits of fresh asparagus nearly year round. When you're at the market, try to find bunches that are bright in color and don't appear woody or fibrous. Asparagus can be eaten raw, but I like to "threaten" them with just a quick visit to a hot grill or pan, or a dip in boiling water for 30 seconds and then straight into a ready bath of ice water. If you find yourself with an abundance, you can par-cook them all together and have them ready to enjoy in the fridge.

Here's a great, probiotic-rich Lemon Yogurt Vinaigrette that pairs beautifully with asparagus:

Serves – enough for many salads!

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup lemon yogurt (or plain yogurt)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup white balsamic vinegar (or other light vinegar)
- Juice of 1 whole lemon (about 3 tbs)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt & pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS:

Vigorously shake or blend together all of the ingredients. Dressing will easily last 2 weeks if kept refrigerated.