

# Asparagus

## GO AUSSIE SPEARS!

September 2016

Thank you so much for all your support for Australian Asparagus! Our growers sincerely appreciate your efforts.

I hope you enjoy your special pack of fresh new season's Australian Asparagus including thick luscious spears, medium spears and mini spears packed into a special reusable bubble bag. I hope you like this little gift. I chose this bag for you because they are so handy to have in the car (or in your handbag) to minimise plastic shopping bags. Although they look tiny they actually hold an amazing amount of shopping! They are from an Australian company [annabeltrends.com](http://annabeltrends.com) located on the Gold Coast.

I also hope you like our new website at [asparagus.com.au](http://asparagus.com.au). Here you can find out all you need to know about asparagus, see a news story of asparagus from paddock to plate, click through to mouthwatering recipes and even meet 16 of our farmers from both the Koo Wee Rup and Sunraysia regions of Victoria.

If posting on social media, please [#australianasparagus](#) or [#aussieasparagus](#).

Should you need images of product, farming or recipes please do not hesitate to contact me directly on M: 0411 647 275 or E: [vikki@vikkileng.com.au](mailto:vikki@vikkileng.com.au).

Cheers!

Vikki Leng

On behalf of the Australian Asparagus Council

**For more information visit [asparagus.com.au](http://asparagus.com.au)**



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# Asparagus

## GO AUSSIE SPEARS!

### Spring is here and so is Australian Asparagus!

**It's time to wave those spears and cheer - spring is here and so is Australian Asparagus!**

As spring approaches we all eagerly await the reappearance of luscious local spears. As we say goodbye to winter we say hello to yummy ways to brighten our day.

Australian Asparagus is much loved for its luscious eating quality. It's also amazingly versatile. Grilled or pan roasted spears are a delicious way to start the day while boosting our veggie quota.

Asparagus also provides a perfect solution for lightening up our BBQ fare for gatherings of family and friends. Picture delicious spears sizzling on the BBQ, platters of tender just cooked spears and cool salads with crunchy fresh asparagus adding vibrancy.



Asparagus is yummy in

- Soups • Salads • Omelette • Frittata
- Quiche • Tarts • Risotto • Pasta • Pizza
- Burgers • Wraps • Bruschetta • Fritters
- Sauces • Salsas • Toasted sandwiches
- Dips • Pesto • And much, much more!

Asparagus also suits most cooking methods • Grill • BBQ • Stir-fry  
• Microwave • Oven roast • Blanch  
• Steam • Boil • Pickle

Asparagus is quick and easy to prepare and cook too – simply snap or trim any woody ends and we're only minutes away from boosting our vegetable intake in the most delicious way.

Take it from Accredited Practising Dietitian Glenn Cardwell who says, *"Why take a supplement when asparagus can provide us with essential nutrients like the essential B group vitamins folate, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, B6 and biotin, along with vitamin C?"*

See attached Spearheading Health with Asparagus Report by Glenn Cardwell.

#### Seasonal availability

- Australian asparagus is available from September to March with most Australian Asparagus produced during spring between September and November.
- A smaller supply of Australian asparagus is also available during the summer months (a number of growers cultivate summer asparagus by setting aside fields of new asparagus ferns ready for 'summer cut').
- When Australian asparagus is out of season, or when supplies are limited such as at the beginning and end of the season, asparagus is imported to supplement local supplies and satisfy consumer demand.

#### Selecting asparagus

- Look for firm, bright, smooth spears of uniform size with closed, compact tips.
- When you snap freshly harvested asparagus, it should be crisp, moist and juicy.

#### Storing asparagus

- Freshly harvested asparagus is very similar to cut flowers. It needs to be kept in cool, humid conditions.
- One way to keep asparagus fresher for longer is to wrap it in a damp tea towel, pop it in a plastic bag and store it in the crisper compartment of your refrigerator.
- Another way is to stand the fresh spears upright in a container with 1cm cold water, cover and store it in the refrigerator.

#### Preparing asparagus

- Simply snap off any woody ends with your forefinger and thumb. Alternatively, run a knife along the stalk until it meets less resistance, and then cut the end off at this point.
- Asparagus can be served both raw and cooked - try it fresh in salads and salsas as well as in an endless variety of cooked dishes.

**For more information visit [asparagus.com.au](http://asparagus.com.au)**



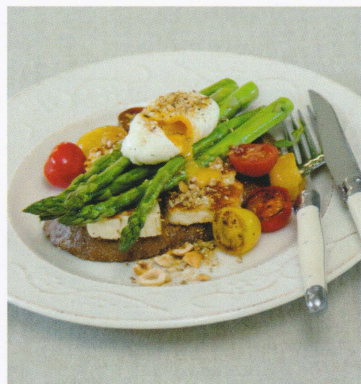
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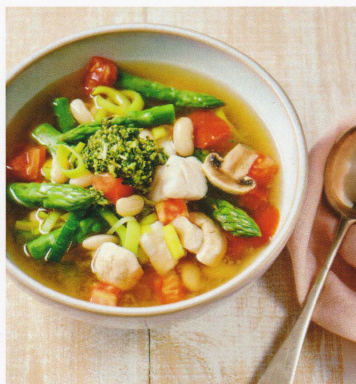
## Check out our new recipes\*



Rise and shine with **Breakfast Asparagus, Haloumi, Soft Poached Eggs and Hazelnut Dukkah** – it's yummy at any time of the day.



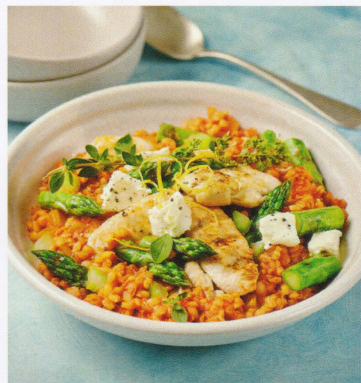
Savour **Asparagus and Smoked Salmon Rolls with Horseradish Cream** as a vibrant brunch dish, starter or finger food with drinks.



Treat yourself to **Asparagus Rockling and Cannellini Bean Soup** hearty enough to double as a light meal throughout the season.



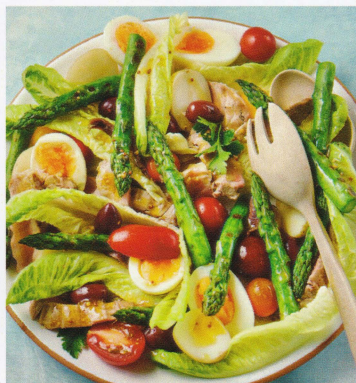
Curl up with **Fragrant Asparagus, Chicken and Prawn Laksa** bursting with flavour and spear goodness.



Nourish yourself with **Char-Grilled Asparagus and Chicken with Barley Risotto** sure to be a family favourite.



Spice up your life with **Asparagus and Beef Red Curry Stir-Fry** – it's as colourful as it is tasty.



Create a platter of **BBQ Asparagus Nicoise Salad** perfect for gatherings of family and friends.



Whip up **Asparagus and Prawn Rice Paper Rolls** for a snack or light meal and have fun varying the recipe!

\*The full versions of these recipes are available on our new responsive website allowing you to view recipes and tips on all your screens – especially handy when shopping for recipe ingredients (see website listed below).

## From the Growers

Australian Asparagus Council President, James Terry anticipates an excellent season this year.

*"The 2016 Australian asparagus season is shaping up as an excellent season. Asparagus crowns require a proper dormancy period, which has occurred during the winter of 2016. All growers are prepared and eagerly waiting for the spring season to begin. Asparagus signifies spring and with each warmer spring day, Australia's production rapidly increases peaking normally in early to mid October."*

*The industry is expanding each season, which is a positive for the future. Asparagus takes three years to reach full production and growers invest significant money into the fields each season to make sure that everything is perfectly prepared for the season ahead. We hope everyone enjoys Australian asparagus while in season this spring with lighter production continuing through summer,"* says James.

Meet James and 15 other growers - read their stories in the Meet the Growers section of our website listed below.



## Social Media Hashtags

When posting on social media please use hashtags  
#australianasparagus  
#aussieasparagus

## Industry Snapshot

- More than 95% of Australia's asparagus is grown in Victoria.
- Most of the Australian asparagus crop (70%) is consumed on the domestic market and 30% of Australian asparagus is exported.
- Asparagus is a perennial vegetable arising from a root system of fleshy rhizomes known as the 'crown'.
- In spring the asparagus crown sends up shoots (spears), which are the edible portion of the plant.
- Asparagus is the real fast food - in ideal conditions it can grow 1-2cm per hour!
- Did you know that each spear is harvested by hand when just the right length?
- To maximise freshness, harvesting is done daily in the early hours of the morning with packing on the same day.

## Contacts:

**Vikki Leng, Marketing Consultant** M: 0411 647 275 E: [vikki@vikkileng.com.au](mailto:vikki@vikkileng.com.au)

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**Glenn Cardwell, Accredited Practising Dietitian** M: 0413 806 406 E: [glenn@glenncardwell.com](mailto:glenn@glenncardwell.com)



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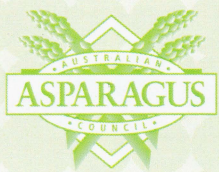


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# Spearheading Health with Asparagus

The official nutrition report of the Australian Asparagus Council

Asparagus has abundant nutrition packed into every spear, including a range of B group vitamins, vitamin C and potassium. Add to that the emerging research that asparagus has bio-active compounds like antioxidants that are helping protect the body against future disease and you have a pretty impressive vegetable.

With so few kilojoules asparagus happily passes on its good nutrition without affecting our weight. Asparagus has no cholesterol, virtually no fat and only 67kjs (16 calories) in a serve. It is well known that the fibre in vegetables such as asparagus is exceptionally helpful in keeping our insides healthy and regular. One serve of asparagus provides 1.7g of fibre, about 7% of our daily needs.

## Vitamins & Minerals in Asparagus

**Asparagus is a wonderful source of B vitamins, vitamin C and potassium, which are all nutrients essential for good health.**

### B Vitamins

B group vitamins help the body convert fuel from the diet, such as carbohydrate, into energy. With sufficient B vitamins it is easier for us to be active and get the best out of each day. In addition, several of the B vitamins, like thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and biotin, help enzymes do their job in the normal metabolism of the body. Vitamin B6 helps the enzymes involved in the metabolism of amino acids from protein. Folate is important in the creation of new cells in the body. As you can see from the table to the right, asparagus has plentiful B vitamins.

### Folate

One B vitamin that has generated a lot of interest is folate because of its powerful health benefits. For example, adequate folate during pregnancy helps Mum deliver a healthy baby (too little folate is linked to spinal deformities in babies). Less well known is that adequate folate is also associated with a lower risk of heart disease and stroke because folate helps keep the homocysteine in blood at a healthy level, thus reducing the risk of artery blockage (atherosclerosis). High levels of blood homocysteine causes atherosclerosis.

### Vitamin C

One serve of asparagus provides a quarter of our daily needs of vitamin C. You may have heard that vitamin C acts as an antioxidant in the body to help protect cells from damage. You may also have heard that vitamin C helps the body absorb iron in the diet. Both of these facts are true, yet vitamin C is involved in other vital aspects of our health. Vitamin C is needed to form collagen, which is crucial in forming healthy bones, teeth and even arterial walls. Without vitamin C, many neurotransmitters and hormones would not be made. It is one really important vitamin. When you think of vitamin C, don't just think fruit, think asparagus too.

### Potassium & Sodium

Potassium is essential for a steady heartbeat and healthy blood pressure. When people eat lots of salty snacks and processed foods, and too few vegies, then the balance gets out of kilter, leading to high blood pressure. Eating less high sodium (salty) foods and more high potassium foods help keeps fluid balance and blood pressure normal. Asparagus has the balance perfect: plenty of potassium and virtually no sodium.

### Iron

Iron is a very important mineral for healthy blood. With adequate iron the body can get adequate oxygen to all parts of the body, especially to the muscles during exercise. Although asparagus provides only a modest amount of iron, being high in vitamin C, the body is better able to absorb the iron in asparagus and the rest of the meal.



**Vitamins in One Serve of Asparagus**  
(One serve = 3-4 spears = 75g)

NUTRIENT	AMOUNT	% OF DAILY NEEDS
Thiamin mg	0.11	10
Riboflavin mg	0.09	7.5
Niacin equiv mg	1.05	7
B6 mg	0.09	7
Biotin mcg	3.6	14
Folate mcg	86	22
Vitamin C mg	11	24

mg = milligram, mcg = microgram

As you can see from the table above, one serve of asparagus provides over 10% of our daily needs of thiamine, biotin, folate and vitamin C, making it an excellent source of vitamins.

**Minerals in One Serve of Asparagus**  
(One serve = 3-4 spears = 75g)

NUTRIENT	AMOUNT	% OF DAILY NEEDS
Iron mg	0.75	4-9
Potassium mg	240	7.5
Sodium mg	1.5	N/A

mg = milligram, N/A = Not Applicable

**For more information visit [asparagus.com.au](http://asparagus.com.au)**

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## Antioxidants & Bioactive Compounds in Asparagus

Asparagus provides some powerful antioxidants, such as rutin, carotenoids (e.g. beta-carotene), flavonoids, vitamin C, saponins and glutathione.

Rutin reduces oxidative damage and inflammation in the body. Asparagus has sterol saponins that may protect the body against tumours as they inhibit the growth of human cancer cells in a laboratory setting. The major saponin present in the asparagus is protodioscin. The tip of the spear has the highest amount of rutin, while the bottom of the spear has higher levels of protodioscin. So, you can see that asparagus has goodness through its entire length!

Asparagus has one of the highest glutathione levels of any vegetable and far more than common fruits. Glutathione plays a big role in the antioxidant systems in every body cell and is part of the cells defence against oxidative stress.

Although we cannot promise that asparagus will stop us from getting cancer, it will, in a diet of plentiful fruit and vegetables, really help in keeping our bodies healthy and at a lower risk of cancer.

## Seven Very Good Reasons to Eat Asparagus

- 1 Asparagus has a great flavour and is very affordable.
- 2 Asparagus is low in kilojoules, without fat or cholesterol, while providing fibre. That makes it a must for any diet, including a weight loss diet.
- 3 Asparagus provides the essential B group vitamins thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, B6 and biotin.
- 4 Asparagus is a great source of folate, with one serve giving us over 20 percent of our daily needs. Folate is important for expectant mothers and for reducing heart disease risk.
- 5 It's not only fruit that gives us vitamin C. One serve of asparagus provides about 25 percent of our daily needs of vitamin C.
- 6 Asparagus has a brilliant range of bio-active compounds, such as antioxidants like rutin and beta-carotene. The research strongly suggests that the bioactive compounds in asparagus are keeping us healthy, well into old age.
- 7 Asparagus has potassium and the compound nicotianamine to help keep our blood pressure healthy.

## Author

Glenn Cardwell, Accredited Practising Dietitian, Accredited Nutritionist, Nutrition Impact P/L, [www.glenncardwell.com](http://www.glenncardwell.com)

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## Summary of Nutrients in One Serve of Asparagus (One serve = 3-4 spears = 75g)

NUTRIENT	AMOUNT	% OF DAILY NEEDS
Kilojoules	67	N/A
Calories	16	N/A
Protein g	1.9	N/A
Fat g	0.1	N/A
Cholesterol mg	0	N/A
Carbohydrate g	1.1	N/A
Fibre g	1.7	7
Thiamin mg	0.11	10
Riboflavin mg	0.09	7.5
Niacin equiv mg	1.05	7
B6 mg	0.09	7
Biotin mcg	3.6	14
Folate mcg	86	22
Vitamin C mg	11	24
Iron mg	0.75	4-9
Potassium mg	240	7.5
Sodium mg	1.5	N/A

N/A = Not Applicable, g = gram; mg = milligram; mcg = microgram



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