



ASPARAGUS



The asparagus is a nourishing and tasty vegetable and is probably native to Mesopotamia. It roused great interest during the ancient time but only during the Middle Age it was widely cultivated as a vegetable crop.

It has been classified in the lily family: the upper part has feathery foliage, small yellow flowers and reddish berries. The edible part is the asparagus shoot, the tender part of the so called spear that develops on woody rootstocks (rhizomes). There are many varieties like the Bassano and Cesena white asparagus, the Altedo type which colour is green (this is the only asparagus that doesn't need peeling), and the Napoletano type which spears are violet. It is now some years since the asparagus has obtained the PGI (Protected Geographic Indication). It seems that the Bassano asparagus (Vicenza province) has been incidentally discovered during the 16th century: the story tells that a severe hailstorm occurred in that area and destroyed the external part of the vegetable. The asparagus farmer was forced to pick up the part of the plant under the ground, the white part. He tasted the asparagus and understood that it was not only edible but also tasty. Since then the farmers started to pick up asparagus before it sprouts.



Asparagus is low in calories and it is recommended in hypocaloric diet. The asparagus is purifying and healing but is also rich in uric acid and is not recommended for cystitis or kidney diseases.

Asparagus is a good source of folate, fibers, Vitamin A, B1, B6, C, amino acids, carotenoids and phosphorus. This vegetable is very rich in potassium a substance that helps heart and muscles.

Like many other plants in the free nature the asparagus has many medicinal properties and is recommended in rheumatic diseases.

TIPS : the best way to eat asparagus is to grate the raw spears in different salad combinations. It is very good to drink the centrifuged juice.

Here the recipes with asparagus for the most tasting preparations.

ASPARAGUS AND EGGS A LA BASSANESE

The ingredients like asparagus and hard-cooked-eggs go really well together and this combination has a tradition that goes back a long time so that this recipe has just to be defined "classic".

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

1 kg Bassano white asparagus, 1 **glass** extra virgin olive oil, 8 eggs, vinegar, salt and pepper



Wash and peel the asparagus, take off the tough bottoms. Divide in 4 bunches and tie them up. Cook them in boiling and salted water (in the tall asparagus steamer) making sure that each of the spears face a similar direction out of the water: steam and warmth will cook them to perfection. Boil for 15', take them out from the water and wrap up in a dishcloth. Cook separately the eggs for 8', take them away from the fire, peel them. Take and untie one bunch of asparagus, take two eggs and place all of them on a warm dish.

Your diners will crush the eggs with the fork to obtain a consistent cream to season with extra virgin olive oil, salt, pepper and vinegar.

For this recipe our Sommelier suggests a scented white wine like doc Breganze, Sauvignon or Vesparolo, Pinot dei Colli Berici or Soave classic.

LEEK AND POTATO CREAM WITH ASPARAGUS TOPS

Ingredients (SERVES 4)

3 potatoes, 1,5 kg leeks, 200 gr green asparagus, 1 lt. broth, salt, butter



Clean the leeks, wash and finely slice using mostly the white part of the plant. Stir fry in olive oil and butter, add peeled and chopped potatoes and the broth. Add salt and cook for 45/50' and then pass through a vegetable sieve. Stir fry the asparagus tops in the butter, place them in the middle over the leek and potato cream. Serve it immediately (hot), if you want with croutons. For this recipe our Sommelier suggests a scented white wine like DOC Breganze, Sauvignon or Vesparolo, Pinot dei Colli Berici or Soave classic.

More....



ASPARAGUS ROLLS

Ingredients (SERVES 4)

8 veal rump steaks (500 gr.), 80 gr raw ham, 16 white asparagus, 4 slim slices fresh Asiago cheese, white flour, garlic, parsley , ½ glass dry white wine , 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, salt, pepper

Chop the garlic and the parsley.

Roll out the veal rump steaks, add salt, pepper and the chopped vegetables. Fill each steak with a half slice cheese and one slice ham, place in the middle two asparagus spears (washed and peeled). Roll up and fix with toothpicks. Pass each in a little flour and fry them in two tablespoons of olive oil. Add wine, let it evaporate, season with salt and pepper. Cook them softly and serve.

Our Sommelier suggests a light red wine from the Colli Euganei (Merlot oder Cabernet) or a Valpolicella red wine.

