

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



facebook.com/asparaguscouncil



instagram.com/aussieasparagus

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

James Terry, President, Australian Asparagus Council M: 0433 565 833 E: james@momack.com.au

Glenn Cardwell, Accredited Practising Dietitian M: 0413 806 406 E: glenn@glenncardwell.com

For more information visit asparagus.com.au



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