

FLAVOUR TO SPEAR



The ancient Greeks thought that **asparagus** could cure toothaches and prevent bee stings.

Okay, that's a stretch.

But the elegant, nutrient-rich vegetable—now in season—has a lot to offer.

Just six spears of cooked asparagus come

with 2 grams of fibre, 10% of a day's vitamin A and vitamin C, and 60% of a day's folate—all for only 20 calories. And asparagus is ranked as one of the most "consistently clean" fruits and vegetables because it rarely contains pesticide residues.

But asparagus has another asset: its flavour is so distinctive that you barely need to season it. Brush it lightly with olive oil and roast until it's bright green, then spritz with fresh-squeezed lemon. Or sauté it with olive oil and minced fresh ginger and garlic. Or steam it and drizzle with a mustard vinaigrette (see recipe on p. 14). You can even use raw asparagus as crudité for your hummus or yogurt-dill dip.

Just make sure you don't overcook the poor plant. Once the colour hits olive green, you've got a stringy, soggy, off-tasting mess.

And don't bother breaking off the woody ends before you start cooking. Use a vegetable peeler to remove their outer layer and you've got another inch or so of asparagus to savour.

Bonus: asparagus usually comes wrapped in nothing more than a rubber band. No plastic, cardboard, Styrofoam, etc.

The only leftover will be the satisfied grin on your face.

NOCAFÉ

"Enjoy the delicious taste of our milky, creamy Latte, anytime, anywhere," says the box of **Nescafé Original Latte**. "Indulge guilt-free!" says the company's Web site.

How can you go wrong? Follow the directions to "mix one sachet with 2/3 cup (150 mL) hot water in your favourite cup. Sweeten as desired," and "Enjoy!"

You've got to admit: there's nothing more appealing than zipping up your hot water with a packet of skim milk powder, hydrogenated coconut and/or palm kernel oil, modified milk ingredients, instant coffee, dried glucose syrup, sugar, dipotassium phosphate, sodium phosphate, sodium citrate, and flavour.

As the Web site says, "With less than 90 calories per serving, it is a great way to perk up your afternoon coffee, without the extra calories." Perk it up by dumping 6 grams of saturated fat—a third of a day's worth—into your caffeine-craving arteries, perhaps.

And that's if you stop at 2/3 cup. You're likely to need two sachets (at 12 grams of saturated fat and 180 calories) to handle a mug's worth of water.

Of course, with Nescafé's Original Latte, you miss out on the protein, calcium, riboflavin, and potassium you'd get in a *real* latte, which is about 2/3 steamed milk and 1/3 espresso.

But why worry about that when you can "indulge guilt-free"?



TIP
OF THE MONTH

Liven up your dishes.
Grate the outer rind of an organic lemon (the yellow portion only; the white can be bitter) onto freshly steamed veggies, grilled fish, or grilled chicken.

Nestlé: (800) 387-4636

About CSPI, publisher of *Nutrition Action Healthletter*



The Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), founded in 1971, is an independent non-profit consumer health group. CSPI advocates honest food labelling and advertising, safer and more nutritious foods, and pro-health alcohol policies. CSPI's work is supported by *Nutrition Action Healthletter* subscribers and foundation grants. CSPI accepts no government or industry funding. *Nutrition Action Healthletter*, which has been published in the U.S. since 1974 and in Canada since 1996, accepts no advertising.

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