NUTRITION & FOOD SERVICES
NOBLESVILLE SCHOOLS

TAKE A TASTE At Home Asparagus

Fun Facts about Asparagus:

- Asparagus was first cultivated about 2500 years ago in Greece. The name is a Greek word, meaning stalk or shoot. The Greeks believed asparagus was a herbal medicine which, among other things, would cure toothaches and prevent bee stings.
- The asparagus plant is a member of the lily family, which also includes onions, leeks and garlic.
- Not all asparagus is green; there are purple and white varieties too! Purple asparagus is slightly sweeter than the green type. The white asparagus is unique becuase it is grown in the underground in the dark!
- Asparagus grows as a stem up from the ground - they can grow 5-8 inches tall and their roots can be as deep as 20 feet!
- Asparagus plans can live for as long as 15 years! It is a perennial plant, meaning that it grows back each spring!



WAYS TO ENJOY ASPARAGUS:

- **Raw** - enjoy in your favorite dip or salad
- **Grill/Broil** - drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasoning, cook 5-8 min
- **Saute or Stir-Fry** - drizzle oil in a pan over medium-high heat. Place bite size (1") pieces in pan for 5-8 min
- **Roast** - drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasonings, roast in oven at 400°F, about 5-8 min
- **Season** - to enhance flavor, season with allspice, basil, dill weed, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, thyme, or lemon juice.

Asparagus Nutrition:

- **A serving of asparagus contains 52% of the daily value of vitamin K!** This is a fat-soluble vitamin involved in blood clotting, bone health, and regulating blood calcium levels!
- Asparagus is an excellent source of **folate**, which promotes proper cell growth and DNA synthesis and repair.
- Asparagus is a good source of **vitamin A,** which is a fat-soluble vitamin that helps support the immune system and is essential for vision health.
- Asparagus contains a good source of **thiamin**, which plays a critical role in energy metabolism and the growth, development, and function of cells.
- Nonheme iron is also found in asparagus. Iron is an important building block of hemoglobin and myoglbin, which help bring oxygen to the lungs and muscle tissues, respectively.
- Asparagus contains a type of insuluble fiber, called inulin, which supports healthy gut bateria and aids in the management of diseases such as ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

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Make it at home!

Q: What do you use for a flat tire?
A: A-spare-I-guess!

Springtime Frittata



Great for breakfast, lunch, or even dinner, this festive spring fritatta is full of essential vitamins and minerals from the asparagus to keep your body healthy. It's also packed with protein from the eggs and cheese to make your muscles strong and feeling satisfied!

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons oil
- ⅓ cup finely chopped sweet onion
- 2 cups thin asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 4 eggs
- ½ cup low-fat milk
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese

Directions

1. Place oven rack on the top third of oven. Pre-heat broiler.
2. In a 10-inch heavy, oven-proof skillet, heat oil on HIGH. Reduce to MEDIUM and add onions. Sauté about 4 minutes, or until softened. Add asparagus and cook 2 minutes, or until crisp-tender.
3. In a small bowl, whisk eggs, milk and pepper until blended. Stir in the cheese. Pour the egg mixture over the vegetables. Turn heat to LOW and cook until the egg mixutre is almost set (about 4 minutes).
4. Using oven mitts, move the skillet to the broiler and cook until mixture begins to brown (about 4 minutes or the center is 165°F.) Serve warm.



STEM Connection: White Asparagus



The green color of asparagus comes from chlorophyll which is activated by the sun during photosynthesis. White asparagus is grown with little sun exposure, which inhibits the chlorophyll pigment activation. During production, farmers cover the asparagus plants with soil or other materials to block the sunlight. Because the asparagus doesn't get sunlight, the chlorophyll pigment is not developed, so the asparagus stalk stays white! White asparagus tends to have a more mild, slightler sweeter and more delicate flavor than green asparagus, which has a more grassy, earthy flavor. → Watch this **VIDEO** to see the process in action!