



APRIL RECIPE



SPRING CAPRESE ASPARAGUS SALAD

Asparagus is plentiful in the spring and can easily be found in your local grocery store or perhaps your farmers' market.

Ingredients

Serves 6

- 1 lb. asparagus, stalks trimmed
- Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling
- Kosher or sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 c. shredded part-skim milk mozzarella cheese
- 2 c. cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 c. balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 c. honey
- Thinly sliced fresh basil, for garnish

NATURE-BASED WAYS TO NURTURE HEALTHY HABITS

By Daniel Hatcher, Director Community Partnerships
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This month, my garden is teaching me a lesson in patience. The Mid-Atlantic region where I live has been dark, cold, and snowy and my herbs and flowers have been growing much slower than usual. I've even tried moving them around to get as much sun as possible. If you're like me and your harvest hasn't been what you hoped for, you can still add more plant-based foods to your diet by trying the 1-week Commit to Health Plant-Based Breakfast Challenge. I started the challenge with simple but tasty whole grain oatmeal.

While you patiently watch your seedlings grow, a quick activity with a STEM education twist is to re-grow vegetables. It is possible to grow a lot of different veggies from kitchen scraps, from scallions to carrot greens and ginger, but one of the easiest is celery and it doesn't take very long (see page 2). Do-it-yourself "ants on a log" are an inexpensive crowd-pleaser and a travel-friendly plant-based snack! As you add more variety of vegetables to your diet this month, encourage children to do the same with a taste test. If you are planning a school or community garden for the spring, a student taste test can help inspire what you plant.

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 425°.
2. On a large baking sheet, toss asparagus with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Push to one side of the baking sheet
3. On the other side of the baking sheet, toss cherry tomatoes with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Bake until the asparagus is tender, about 10 minutes. Remove from the oven, sprinkle the cheese on top of the asparagus, return to the oven and bake until the is melted, about 5 -10 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, make balsamic glaze: In a small saucepan, combine balsamic vinegar and honey. Simmer until reduced by half, stirring occasionally, 15 minutes (the mixture should coat the back of a spoon). Let cool slightly.
5. Transfer cheesy asparagus to a serving platter. Top with roasted tomatoes then drizzle with balsamic glaze and garnish with fresh basil.
6. Serve with toasted French bread slices/crostini.

Source: Carol Chong, RD
National Nutrition Advisor
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DON'T WORKOUT ALONE - WHERE YOU CAN FIND SUPPORT

- Friends and family: Loved ones who live with you or near you are a great choice to help you meet your goals and you'll be helping them improve their own health in the process. Suggest a daily or weekly "workout date" with a friend or family member and promise to hold each other accountable to keep the date.
- Local fitness stores: Many locally-owned fitness stores -- especially those that focus on specific sports like yoga and running offer clubs or programs you can join.
- Charity/fundraising teams: Many charities host walks, runs, triathlons and other events to raise funds and awareness. Look on local charity websites for a team you can join to train for an upcoming event in your area.
- Sport-specific clubs or groups: If your fitness routine revolves around a specific activity like tai chi, cycling or dance, search online for people in your area that gather regularly. This will give you a regular time and place to go to do the activity and you'll meet new friends who share your passion!

Source: American Heart Association