

Delightful pairings for sunny days

Asparagus and rocket are both in season currently and make a delightful pairing in this light salad, perfect for enjoying alfresco in the beautiful sunshine we have been blessed with recently.

Asparagus is a good source of a myriad of different nutrients including vitamins A, C, K, and B6, potassium, folic acid, riboflavin, thiamine, niacin, phosphorus, iron, protein, and fibre. The dietary fibre in asparagus is classed as a prebiotic as it has been shown to feed the beneficial bacteria in our gut microbiome, such as the *Bifidobacteria* and *Lactobacillus* species. It is the amino acid asparagine in asparagus that gives it the characteristic odour when excreted. Asparagus is usually served steamed or grilled, but this time we are keeping it raw.

Rocket is another nutritional powerhouse, containing vitamins A and C, folic acid, manganese, calcium, magnesium, riboflavin, potassium, copper, iron, and zinc, an excellent source of antioxidants. Bitter leaves such as rocket are believed to aid digestion and are a traditional accompaniment to heavy or fatty meals.

Asparagus and rocket salad

(serves 2-4)

1 pack of asparagus

1 large handful of rocket

3 tbsps extra virgin olive oil

juice of ½ a lemon

1 tsp mustard of your choice

10g grated parmesan

pinch of black pepper



Optional extras: lightly toasted mixed seeds, or crispy bacon lardons

Cut or snap the woody ends off the asparagus and ribbon length-ways using a peeler, or mandolin on the thin setting. I find one of the easiest ways to do this is to work from one side halfway through, then start from the other side and work through to the centre.

Place the asparagus ribbons in a salad bowl and move on to the dressing. Combine the oil, lemon juice, mustard, parmesan, and pepper, and pour over the asparagus, mixing well. This can be left to sit for a couple of minutes, so the lemon juice softens the asparagus ribbons.

Just before serving add the rocket and mix. This makes a lovely accompaniment to chicken and fish, or even a lentil dahl, as I recently discovered!

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