

What Is Food? Better Make That: Who Are You?

By Mrs. Richard C. Spence
What is food? It all depends on whom you are talking to.

To a nutritionist, food is calories, vitamins and minerals.

To a chemist, food is chemical elements and compounds.

To a chef, food is creative opportunity.

To a farmer, food is a product to be grown, harvested and sold.

But what is food to the homemaker? You have to find your own answer. Food can be a method of showing your family your love for them, the favorite dishes prepared just so. Or food can be used to punish, the "unfavorite" dishes served in a hostile atmosphere.

Food may be a method to impress friends or guests. Food can say "thank you" or "please." Food can be fellowship the time of day when the family gets together. Food can be courtship. Your first date was probably over a cola or coffee. Food can mean drudgery, a job detested and passed over as quickly as possible.

Food can mean ownership, the strictly mine domain of the housewife. Food can be security, the storage of things that will protect against hardship.

Food is subsistence. Some people eat to live.

Food is satisfaction. Other people live to eat.

What should you spend for food? I guess it depends on what food is to you.

ASPARAGUS

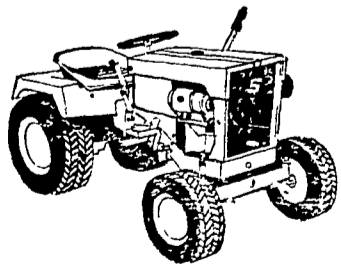
Part of the lily family, asparagus is one of springtime specialties.

Look for asparagus that is firm, fresh looking and has bright green stalks with compact tips. Asparagus with all green stalks has a larger proportion of edible vegetable per pound.

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Avoid thin angular stalks which are often tougher and stringier than medium to thick sized asparagus.

Care, cold and speed are essential for top quality asparagus. Use fresh asparagus as soon as possible after buying. Wash and trim it ready for cooking, if storing is necessary. Pat it thoroughly dry and store in moisture-proof bags in the refrigerator. Drying is essential since moist asparagus has a short storage life.

Green asparagus is an excellent source of vitamin A and C while blanched asparagus offers only vitamin C. Asparagus also contains rutin, a chemical important in keeping blood vessels in good condition.

Avoid overcooking the delicate asparagus tips during preparation. Tie stalks in a bunch and cook upright in a double boiler with water covering the lower half of the spears. Use the top half of the boiler as a cover. This method boils the toughest stem while the tips are steamed tender.

Serve asparagus as a main vegetable, a side accompaniment or in tasty souffles, cream soups, and casserole dishes.

SPRING LUNCHEON TREAT
1/2 pound fresh or 1 (10 ounce) package of frozen asparagus spears

- Water**
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
 - 1 small onion, chopped
 - 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
 - 1 1/4 cups milk
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon basil leaves
 - 1 cup sliced cooked ham
 - 1 (2-ounce) jar pimientos, sliced
 - 4 Holland rusk

Parsley sprigs, optional

Hard cooked egg slices optional

Cook asparagus in water until tender, drain, keep warm. Melt butter or margarine, add onion and saute until golden. Stir in flour, then next three ingredients.

Bring to boil, stirring, then cook until thickened. Add ham and pimientos, sliced, heat through. Spoon over Holland rusk, which has been topped with asparagus. If desired, garnish with parsley and egg slices. Makes four servings.

RHUBARB

Locally grown rhubarb is now available. Field grown rhubarb is dark red and rich in color with coarse, green foliage while forced or hot house rhubarb is pale pink or light red with underdeveloped yellow-green leaves.

Well-grown stalks generally have more flavor than those showing little color. Stale rhubarb has a wilted, flabby appearance and may be stingy and poor in flavor.

Choose rhubarb stalks which are fairly thick. Tenderness can be determined by bending the stalk to see if it is brittle or crisp.

Keep rhubarb crisp and cool by washing, draining and storing in moisture-proof bags until preparation time. Cut off and throw away rhubarb leaves as they are harmful to eat. The high concentration of oxalic acid they contain is dangerous to the body in large amounts.

Rhubarb or "pie plant" is a favorite for pies and tarts but there are other uses, too. Jams, jellies, sauces, puddings, punch and baked dishes are all rhubarb possibilities.

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CUCUMBERS

When buying cucumbers, look for a good green color and firmness over the entire length. They should be well shaped and well developed but not too large in diameter. A cucumber may have greenish white color and that have withered or shriveled ends as these are signs of toughness and bitter flavor. And avoid those that are very large and have a dull color turning yellow.

CARROTS

Almost all carrots reach the market prepackaged but topless, to the double benefit of the buyer. Removal of the tops means a better product at less cost. The product is better because the carrot tops draw moisture from the carrot, which causes shriveling. The prepackaged topless product ships better and stays fresh longer.

Cost is less because shipping (Continued on Page 21)

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