



# Asparagus

Asparagus is one of my favorite vegetables. I love going to the grocery or farmer’s market and finding the fresh stalks this time of year. I even invested in an upright steamer to make preparing fresh asparagus a breeze.

One time I thought about planting some until I found out that you must plant it a year before it will begin to produce. It often takes up to three years before harvesting can take place. It takes time for the plant’s fibrous root system to develop. When it does begin to produce it will generally last for about 15 years without being replanted if it is well cared for.

Asparagus is a member of the lily plant family. Asparagus spears grow from a crown that is planted about a foot deep in sandy soils. Under ideal conditions, an asparagus spear can grow 10 inches in a 24-hour period. Each crown will send spears up for about 6-8 weeks during the spring and early summer. The outdoor temperature determines how much time will be between pickings. Early in the season there may be four or five days between pickings. As the days and nights get warmer, it may have to be picked every 24 hours.

Asparagus is very low in calories, fat-free, cholesterol-free and carbohydrates.

It is also low in sodium and high in folic acid. Asparagus is a good source of potassium, fiber, thiamin and vitamins A, B6 and C.

Miss Manners tells us that an asparagus spear should be eaten with the fingers – one of the only foods that we are allowed to do so at the table when using our good manners.

Fresh asparagus should be stored clean, cold and covered. Use within two or three days of purchase for best quality. To maintain freshness, stand spears in two inches of cold water or wrap a damp paper towel around the stem ends.

Before cooking asparagus, snap the tough ends off the bottom. You can cook asparagus in a saucepan, frying pan or double boiler. Use a small amount of boiling water to place asparagus spears in. Fresh asparagus should be crisp tender in 5-8 minutes, depending on the size of the stalk.

The general rule of thumb is that the larger the diameter of the stalk, the better the quality. You may also prepare fresh asparagus in the microwave.

Place one pound of asparagus in a microwaveable dish or serving bowl. Arrange spears with tips in the center. Add about ¼ cup of water

and cover tightly and microwave for 4-7 minutes.

Roasted asparagus is also a delicious way to enjoy this vegetable. Spread prepared asparagus spears on a large rimmed baking dish. Drizzle spears with olive oil and roll them around to completely cover each spear with the olive oil. Place in a 450 degree oven and roast from 10-15 minutes. Occasionally shake the pan to roll them around for even browning. Test with a fork to determine doneness. The spears should be browned, but not charred. They will shrink and have a wrinkled appearance. Add salt and pepper to serve.

If you aren’t a big asparagus fan or have never really cooked it very often, try something different and introduce your family to this vegetable. I have some more asparagus recipes for you to try. Thanks for Reading.

## BACON-WRAPPED ASPARAGUS

1 pound fresh asparagus  
10-12 strips of bacon

Wash and trim asparagus spears. Cut bacon strips in half crosswise. Wrap one half strip bacon around each asparagus spear, leaving the tip and end exposed. Lay on a cookie sheet with sides. Bake at 400 degrees for 20-30 minutes, or until bacon is cooked. Serve warm or at room temperature.

## ROASTED POTATOES and ASPARAGUS

½ cup Italian dressing  
1/3 cup Dijon mustard  
2 pound small red new potatoes  
(washed, unpeeled and quartered – about 1-inch pieces)  
2 cups fresh asparagus

R-S.C., in a separate letter to Esper in late August, also voiced opposition to the move, calling Stripes “a valued ‘hometown newspaper’ for the members of the Armed Forces, their families, and civilian employees across the globe.” He added that “as a veteran who has served overseas, I know the value that the Stars and Stripes brings to its readers.”

In the memo, the department says Esper made the decision as a result of his department-wide budget review. Signed by Army Col. Paul Haverstick, acting director of the Pentagon’s Defense Media Activity, the memo says plans to close the paper are due on Sept. 15 and the last newspaper is to be published on Sept. 30.

The memo adds that if the paper continues to be funded by either a continuing resolution “or other unforeseen circumstances” then Stripes must submit a plan by Sept. 15 to shut down at the end of the next budget year, Sept. 30, 2021. Haverstick’s memo says that in that case, the last date for publication

spears that have been cut into pieces

2 cups grape or cherry tomatoes, cut in half  
1/3 cup sliced green onion

Combine the salad dressing and mustard until blended. Toss ¼ cup of this mixture with potatoes in a medium bowl. Spray a 15 x 10 x 1 inch baking sheet with Pam. Arrange potatoes on pan and bake at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes. Remove from oven and add asparagus; continue to bake for 15 more minutes. Check to see that potatoes are tender and asparagus is lightly browned. Place this mixture into a large bowl. Stir in tomatoes, onion and remaining dressing. Serve warm or at room temperature. This is a great side dish.

## PESTO CHICKEN PASTA

8 oz. bowtie pasta (farfalle), cooked according to package directions  
2 cups fresh asparagus, cut into pieces and steamed  
3 cups cooked, cubed chicken  
1 cup halved cherry tomatoes  
1/3 cup chopped red onion  
1 (2.5 oz) can sliced ripe olives, drained  
¾ cup prepared pesto sauce  
3 Tbsp. grated Romano or Parmesan cheese

Combine cooked pasta and asparagus in a bowl. Stir in chicken, tomatoes, onion and olives. Gently toss with pesto sauce. Serve warm, garnished with cheese.

*\*Lee Ann Fleming is a Holmes County native, food columnist and has garnered fame for her recipes featured in the film, The Help. Fleming can be reached at lafkitchen@hughes.net.*

of the newspaper will be determined based on budget or other circumstances.

The Stripes ombudsman, Ernie Gates, told The Associated Press on Friday that shutting the paper down “would be fatal interference and permanent censorship of a unique First Amendment organization that has served U.S. troops reliably for generations.”

The first newspaper called Stars and Stripes was very briefly produced in 1861 during the Civil War, but the paper began consistent publication during World War I. When the war was over, publication ended, only to restart in 1942 during World War II, providing wartime news written by troops specifically for troops in battle.

Although the paper gets funding from the Defense Department, it is editorially independent and is delivered in print and digitally to troops all over the world.

The Pentagon proposed cutting the paper’s funding when making its budget request earlier this year, triggering angry reactions from

# Middleton - Sims to wed Saturday, October 3



JEFFERY AUSTIN SIMS AND KATHERINE ANN NICOLE MIDDLETON

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Curtis Middleton, Jr. of Benton, announce the engagement of their daughter, Miss Katherine AnnaNicole Middleton, to Jeffrey Austin Sims, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Hines Sims, of Sallis.

Miss Middleton is the granddaughter of the late Mr. Melvin Glenn Spell, Sr. and Mrs. Nancy Ann Ferrell Spell of Lexington and the late Mr. Harold Curtis Middleton, Sr. and Mrs. Cecelia Alice Allen Middleton of Benton.

Katherine is a 2014 graduate of Benton Academy. She received her Associate of Arts focused on Pre-Nursing from Holmes Community College and her ADN in Nursing from Holmes Community College. She is a Registered Nurse in the Intensive Care Unit at Merit Health Central in Jackson, MS.

The prospective bridegroom is the grandson of the late Mr. Ralph Porter Sims and Mrs. Peggy Hines Sims of Ridgeland, formerly of Kosciusko and Mr. and Mrs. James Earl Owens of Kosciusko.

members of Congress.

The House-passed version of the Pentagon budget contains funding for the paper’s publication, but the Senate has not yet finalized a defense funding bill.

Austin is a 2013 graduate of Central Holmes Christian Academy in Lexington, MS. He earned his certificate in HVAC from Holmes Community College. He is employed as an HVAC technician with Ivey Mechanical Company in Ridgeland.

Austin and Katherine will be married on Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 6 p.m. in the Carriage House at The Ivy Venue of Flowood, MS with the Reverend Roger Richardson officiating.

A reception will be held following the ceremony in the Grand Reception Room of the Main House at The Ivy Venue of Flowood, MS.



Camden Graham  
Blake Jones  
December 5



Court Square 834-2721 Lexington

# Pentagon orders shutdown of Stars and Stripes newspaper

Associated Press

The Pentagon has ordered the military’s independent newspaper, Stars and Stripes, to cease publication at the end of the month, despite congressional efforts to continue funding the century-old publication.

The order to halt publication by Sept. 30, and dissolve the organization by the end of January, follows the Pentagon’s move earlier this year to cut the \$15.5 million in funding for the paper from the Defense Department budget. And it is a reflection of the Trump administration’s broader animosity for the media and members of the press.

Members of Congress have objected to the defunding move for months. And senators sent a letter to Defense Secretary Mark Esper this week urging him to reinstate the money. The letter, signed by 15 sena-



MARK ESPER

tors — including Republicans and Democrats — also warns Esper that the department is legally prohibited from canceling a budget program while a temporary continuing resolution to fund the federal government is in effect.

“Stars and Stripes is an essential part of our nation’s freedom of the press that serves the very population charged with defending that freedom,” the senators said in the letter.

Sen. Lindsey Graham,