



Spearheading the Astounding Aspects of Asparagus MP3

Voiceover [00:00:06] (Music plays)

Gary Crawford [00:00:06] Most centers of higher learning are having graduations now, wrapping up their school years. But here at good old VegU-cation University, VegU for short -

Rachel Schoenian, Chantel Oyi [00:00:11] VegU, VegU, VegU!

Gary Crawford [00:00:13] Yeah, they're just starting their academic year, getting into the spirit as you can hear. And yes, they have an immortal VegU fight song: VegU-cation, VegU-cation, vegetables marching on! You say you don't like the veggies, but you'll soon sing a different song. Yeah! May the state of Wisconsin forgive us now. Let's go down to the field for the corn toss to see which vegetable will be kicking off today. Well it's not a field, it's a tent. Here at the Agriculture Department's farmers market in Washington D.C., the whole marching band, the cheerleading squad, the faculty of VegU are here. Yes, both people. We have professors Rachel Schoenian and Chantel Oyi. But first, the corn toss.

Voiceover [00:00:57] We'll have a toss. Call it please, in the air.

Rachel Schoenian [00:01:00] Asparagus!

Gary Crawford [00:01:00] And it comes up asparagus! Oh -.

Rachel Schoenian, Chantel Oyi [00:01:03] Yay!

Gary Crawford [00:01:05] Yay, but, I don't know, you guys you got a tough opening game today, trying to convince some of the doubters that asparagus can be delicious. That's a tough sell.

Rachel Schoenian [00:01:13] We're ready, bring it on.

Gary Crawford [00:01:13] All right. It's not as if asparagus is something new on the scene.

Voiceover [00:01:19] (Music plays)

Gary Crawford [00:01:19] There are pictures from ancient Egypt, 3000 B.C., showing asparagus being served and Rachel says:

Voiceover [00:01:25] (Music plays)

Gary Crawford [00:01:25] In ancient Rome,

Rachel Schoenian [00:01:28] Caesar Augustus was a huge fan of asparagus. He even organized a group of military personnel which made rounds in his empire to import the best varieties back to Rome.

Gary Crawford [00:01:41] And we always knew that his soldiers carried spears.

Rachel Schoenian [00:01:44] They were asparagus spears.

Gary Crawford [00:01:46] Oh, how you hated to say that, Rachel.

Rachel Schoenian [00:01:49] No, not at all.

Gary Crawford [00:01:50] Oh, OK. So, back to winning some fans for asparagus. Some say they just don't like the taste of it.

Chantel Oyi [00:01:55] But we're here today to show you new ways to create recipes around asparagus - which, we're highlighting our tomato, feta, and asparagus recipe today.

Gary Crawford [00:02:04] Oh yeah, and Chantel is cooking this up right now.

Chantel Oyi [00:02:06] So we're going to have our pan sautéed asparagus,

Gary Crawford [00:02:09] - oh boy, yeah -

Chantel Oyi [00:02:10] pan-sautéed grape tomatoes, and we'll cook them down to a nice, firm texture and then we're going to douse them in some white balsamic vinegar and add a little bit of feta and, um, salt and pepper. It's a light meal that could be - you know - placed on a dish as a side or as a full meal.

Gary Crawford [00:02:25] Well, we are about out of time so,

Rachel Schoenian [00:02:27] We got some jokes for you.

Gary Crawford [00:02:28] Oh, OK, Rachel, we got time for one. You two can share the comedic spotlight. So, go ahead with it.

Rachel Schoenian [00:02:33] What do you call a sad asparagus?

Gary Crawford [00:02:36] What do you call a sad asparagus?

Chantel Oyi [00:02:39] A despair-agus!

Gary Crawford [00:02:42] You liked that, don't you?

Chantel Oyi [00:02:42] I did. It was funny!

Gary Crawford [00:02:44] So that's it from VegU for today.

Rachel Schoenian, Chantel Oyi [00:02:49] Yay!

Gary Crawford [00:02:49] Oh, wasn't that bad, was it? For more great recipes for asparagus, go online to What's Cooking? at USDA. And this is Gary Crawford, reporting for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington.