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Savory Spring Asparagus

Asparagus is a spring staple, high in the B-vitamin, folate, which may protect against cancer by helping maintain the integrity of DNA. These little green spears also contain fiber, vitamin C, beta-carotene and the antioxidants glutathione and rutin. This recipe pairs the veggie with red pepper and protein-rich shrimp for simple, healthy meal. A light lemon marinade and fresh herbs add flavor and fragrance to the dish.

Springtime Asparagus with Lemon Garlic Shrimp

- 1 lb. raw extra large shrimp (26-30 count), peeled and deveined
- 1 lemon, cut in half
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 lbs. fresh asparagus, trimmed, cut diagonally in 1-inch pieces
- 2 medium red bell peppers, cut in about 1/4-inch x 1-inch slices
- 1 Tbsp. lemon zest
- Salt to taste
- 1 cup reduced-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 tsp. cornstarch
- 8 cloves garlic, minced (about 2 Tbsp.)
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro, optional

Place shrimp in medium glass bowl. With hand strainer positioned over bowl to catch lemon seeds, squeeze juice from lemon halves over shrimp. Toss shrimp in lemon juice and set aside to marinate.

Heat large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon oil and heat just until oil begins to shimmer. Add asparagus, peppers, lemon zest and salt to taste. Sauté until vegetables begin to soften, about 8-10 minutes. Transfer mixture to medium bowl and cover with foil to keep warm. Set skillet aside off heat.

In small mixing bowl, whisk broth and cornstarch together until smooth.

Return skillet to medium heat. Add remaining tablespoon oil and garlic. Sauté garlic until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add shrimp and sauté 1 minute. Add broth mixture. Cook, gently stirring continually until sauce has thickened and shrimp are pink, about 2 minutes. Remove pan from heat, stir in lemon juice, parsley and cilantro, if using. Season to taste with salt.

Divide vegetables among four dinner plates and top with shrimp.

Makes 4 servings.

Per serving: 263 calories, 9 g total fat (1.5 g saturated fat), 18 g carbohydrate, 30 g protein, 6 g dietary fiber, 315 mg sodium.

