



# WellBeingMD's Mindful Kitchen



## Asparagus with Capers and Lemon Cream Sunflower Sauce

Adapted from Hallelujah Diet

Serves 6 Preparation Time: 15 minutes

### Ingredients:

2 pounds of asparagus

### Lemon Sunflower Cream Sauce

1 tablespoon, small capers, rinsed

1 1/2 cups of untoasted hulled sunflower seeds, soaked

½ cup of fresh basil leaves, loosely chopped

2 gloves of garlic, minced

2 ½ cups of filtered water

2 lemons, juiced

Sea salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions:

1. Place the sunflower seeds in filtered water and let soak for one hour.
2. Drain the water from the sunflower seeds and add them to a high speed blender (Vitamix) along with the filtered water, garlic, lemon juice, and basil. Blend on high speed until smooth.
3. Add capers to sauce; assess and add salt and pepper to taste.
4. Bring water in large sauce pan to boil and add asparagus; cook until bright green and fork tender. Remove and Blanche in a cold water ice bath. Pat dry asparagus with paper towel.
5. Pour lemon cream sauce over asparagus; garnish with thinly chopped basil.

**Nutrition:** The **caper** is the un-opened flower bud used for centuries in Mediterranean cuisine, where it imparts a salty tang and decorative flair to a variety of meats, salads, pastas and other foods. These small buds are handpicked in the early hours of the day and then the buds are washed and allowed to wilt for a few hours in the sun before being put into jars and covered with salt, vinegar, brine or olive oil. Being flower buds, **capers** are, in fact, very low in **calories**; and provide just 23 **calories** per 100 g. Nonetheless, this spice contains many phytonutrients, antioxidants, and vitamins essential for optimum health. **Capers** are one of the highest plant sources of flavonoid compounds rutin and quercetin. In the market place, capers are sold by their size and the smaller sized buds are more valuable than the larger sized ones.



**Do you crave 'junky' foods?** The seeds of a cheerful, hardy summer flower – scientifically known as *Helianthus annuum* – offer a tasty alternative to junk foods such as potato chips and cookies, and can help you redirect your cravings towards healthier fare. **Sunflower seeds** – with their crunchy, pleasing texture and mildly sweet, buttery taste – are a virtually perfect snack food. They are not only packed with essential micronutrients and **ANTIOXIDANTS**, but are also rich in natural plant oils that work together to ward off heart disease. In addition to polyunsaturated linoleic acid, sunflower seeds contain oleic acid – an extremely beneficial monounsaturated acid that is also found in such heart-healthy treats as olives and avocados. Oleic acid helps to lower harmful LDL cholesterol while raising amounts of desirable HDL cholesterol. In addition, animal studies have shown that a diet high in oleic acid can help reverse the negative effects of inflammatory cytokines. As inflammation triggers many serious diseases – including heart disease and cancer – this bodes well for sunflower seeds' ability to promote coronary health.

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