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One of the best ways to make a house into a home is to invite some friends over for a meal. If you try this recipe, let me know how it turns out for you. And if you have a favorite recipe of your own, send it my way.

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In the summer heat, you may notice your appetite diminishing right along with your desire to work in the kitchen. Here are a couple of quick & flavorful recipes to help keep you eating healthy even when it is too hot to whip up a full meal.

### Spinach and Bacon Salad

1 pound spinach, rinsed	1 garlic clove, crushed
3 slices thick-cut bread, for croutons	12 slices of bacon, cut into strips
4 Tbs sunflower oil	4-5 Tbs dressing, bleu cheese or vinaigrette
	Salt & Pepper

Tear the spinach leaves into large pieces & place them in a good-sized serving bowl. Make croutons by removing crusts & cutting bread into cubes. Heat oil in a skillet, add garlic and cook 1 minute. Add bread cubes and cook, stirring frequently, until golden & crisp. Lift out the croutons & drain on paper towels. Add the bacon to the pan and fry for 5 minutes or until crisp. Lift out & drain. Sprinkle bacon over spinach in serving bowl. Spoon the dressing over the salad, add salt & pepper to taste, and toss. Add croutons & serve immediately. Serves 6.

### Asparagus with Parmesan

1 1/4 pounds Asparagus	1 tsp white vinegar
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese	3 garlic cloves, crushed
2 Tbs olive oil	1/4 tsp herbes de Provence
1 Tbs dry white wine	Salt & Pepper

Trim the woody ends off the asparagus. Mix the oil, wine, vinegar, garlic, herbs, salt & pepper in a large bowl. Toss the asparagus in the marinade, cover, and let stand for 15 minutes. Sprinkle the parmesan on a plate, and roll the asparagus in the cheese to coat it. Arrange in a single layer in a large baking dish. Bake at 400° for 15-20 minutes, until lightly browned & sizzling. Serves 4.



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