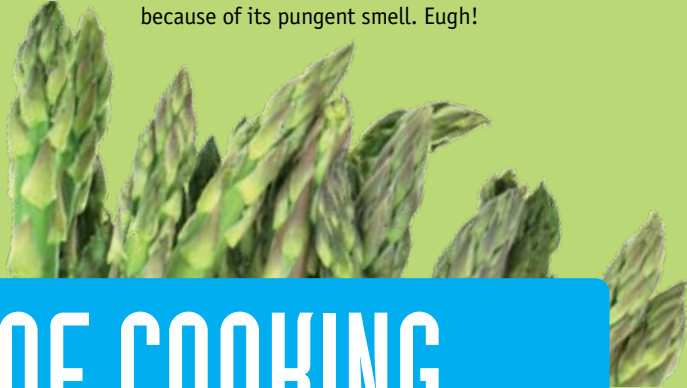


## ASPARAGUS PEE

Ever noticed how your pee smells strange after eating asparagus? About one in three people suffers from 'asparagus pee' – which scientists from the Royal Society of Chemistry believe is caused by the digestion of sulphur-containing amino acids in the asparagus. The body breaks down the complex amino acids into simpler sulphur-based compounds, which are known for their unpleasant odours.

Hydrogen sulphide ( $H_2S$ ), for example, is known as 'rotten egg gas' because of its pungent smell. Eugh!



# OF COOKING

lose their fizz and how are lollipops made?

## STINKY CHEESE

According to Kabelo Segone, chef consultant at the HTA School of Culinary Art, blue cheese is made by mixing curds (coagulated milk) with cultures of the blue mould, *Penicillium roqueforti*. The cheese is aged for two months at cool temperatures and high humidity. Metal rods are used to create the spaces in which the mould grows. This causes the characteristic blue marbling that gives the cheese its 'ripe' flavour and indicates it is ready to eat.

Blue cheese is safe to eat because the fungus *Penicillium roqueforti* is not poisonous and the manufacturing process is sterile. But not all moulds are safe. Some are poisonous and bacteria sometimes can grow along with the mould – next time you notice mould on that old brick of Gouda or Cheddar in the fridge, cut it off before you indulge.

## SWEET SWEET SYRUP

Kabelo Segone, chef consultant at the HTA School of Culinary Art, shared some of the funky names given to sugar syrup when it is prepared at different temperatures: 'Heating sugar syrup to 118 °C creates what we call "soft ball" syrup. When the hot syrup is dipped into cold water, it holds its shape and remains soft. This is used to make fudge.

'Heat the syrup further to 125 °C and it forms a firm but pliable ball that has a chewy texture. This is called "hard ball" syrup and is used for nougat, marshmallows and gummies.

'So-called "soft crack" syrup forms at 134 °C. The syrup is used to make saltwater toffee and butterscotch. It is brittle, but can still be pressed into shape. At 150 °C, "hard crack" syrup forms; this is very brittle and crisp, and is used for glazing fruit and for nut brittles, toffee and lollipops. Beyond this temperature, sugar syrup rapidly turns into caramel.'



### FAST FACT

In movies the 'glass' windows and bottles used by stuntmen and -women are actually made of sugar.

