

Beware Scammers Claiming to Be the IRS

If you receive a voice or email message from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), or you field a phone call from an IRS agent informing you “you owe back taxes” and “you better pay now or be arrested (or deported),” you should assume it’s an [IRS Imposter Scam](#). That’s true even if:¹

- The caller ID shows the “IRS” is calling
- The “IRS agent” offers a badge number
- The “IRS agent” knows the last four digits of your Social Security number

It’s a growing problem

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and IRS have been warning consumers about this scam for several years, but it seems to be happening more frequently. *AARP Magazine* reported:²

“...from 2013 to 2014, complaints about the ‘IRS Scam’ increased 20-fold, with more than 54,000 Americans being targeted in 2014. Fraudsters often target immigrants or older Americans [who are] less likely to have the knowledge or support system that would keep them from falling into the trap...after stoking the fires of fear, the bogus agent turns helpful, providing a solution that involves sending cash in a quick and untraceable way.”

Articles on the IRS and FTC websites assure Americans the real IRS will not contact taxpayers by telephone or email. If you owe taxes, the IRS will send you a letter by mail via the United States Postal Service (USPS). In addition, the IRS does not demand immediate payment. They send a bill, and they don’t specify how you should pay it.³

What should I do if I get a call?

If you receive a call, a voice mail, or an email message, the IRS offers this advice:³

- Do not give out any personal information
- Write down any details offered by the scammer such as the phone number, name, and badge number of the “agent”
- Call the IRS at (800) 829-1040 to confirm the call was a fake
- Report the call to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (www.tigta.gov)
- Report the call to the FTC (www.ftc.gov)

No one wants to owe money to the IRS, and that is probably the reason scammers pretend to be IRS agents. It’s important to protect yourself by remaining alert and aware of common scams.

Plant a Rocket

Arugula, which is also called garden rocket, is a spicy, leafy, and nutritious herb. Whether you grow it in your garden or buy it at the store, it can add interest to raw or cooked dishes. Here’s a great spring recipe from *Cooking Light* that features arugula.^{4,5}

Roasted Asparagus and Arugula Salad with Poached Egg

1 pound green asparagus, trimmed
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
3 tablespoons minced shallots
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons chopped fresh tarragon
1 package (5 ounces) baby arugula
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
4 large eggs
4 slices Italian bread (about 3/4 ounces each), toasted and cut in half diagonally

Preheat oven to 450°. Place asparagus on a jelly roll pan. Drizzle with 2 teaspoons oil; sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon pepper and 1/8 teaspoon salt. Toss gently to coat; arrange in a single layer. Bake at 450° for 5 minutes or until crisp yet tender.

Place remaining 7 teaspoons oil, 1/8 teaspoon pepper, remaining 1/8 teaspoon salt, shallots, juice, and tarragon in a large bowl; stir well with a whisk. Add arugula; toss gently to coat. Place about 1-1/2 cups arugula mixture on each of 4 plates. Top each serving with 1/4 of the asparagus.

Add water to a large skillet, filling two-thirds full, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer. Add vinegar. Break each egg into a custard cup and pour each gently into water; cook 3 minutes or until desired degree of doneness. Carefully remove eggs from pan using a slotted spoon and place 1 poached egg on each plated salad. Sprinkle with remaining 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Arrange 2 bread halves on each plate.

What Do You Know About Inventions?

Some inventions have solved simple problems while others have reshaped our world and the ways in which we live. See what you know about inventions by taking this quiz.

1. The Lemelson-MIT program encourages high school students to solve real world problems through invention. This year, student teams are working on:⁶
 - a. A locker access device to help children with neurodevelopmental disabilities
 - b. A thermoelectric generator for biomass stoves
 - c. A pothole remediation process for Texas roads
 - d. All of the above
2. Popular Science's 2015 Invention Awards included:⁷
 - a. A plane that folds into a car
 - b. Eyeglass lenses that change prescriptions
 - c. Speech-to-text software for Southern accents
 - d. A radiator cozy

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3. Which of the following was invented during the 1920s?⁸
 - a. Traffic signals
 - b. Band-Aids®
 - c. Drive-in restaurants
 - d. All of the above

4. Which of the following was invented during the 1980s?^{9, 10}
 - a. Music Television (MTV)
 - b. Valium
 - c. Handheld calculators
 - d. Automatic teller machines

Meditation Goes Mainstream

If a medication could eliminate hot flashes would you be interested? What if it reduced anxiety, eliminated insomnia, or lowered blood pressure? How about if it helped with irritable bowel syndrome or ulcerative colitis and had no known side effects?¹¹

A number of scientific studies have been exploring claims that meditation improves health and well-being. To date, research has provided evidence that mindfulness meditation (the most studied form of meditation) alters the way in which our brains function and has the potential to help improve a variety health issues.¹¹ *The New York Times* reported on one study:¹²

“...Follow-up brain scans showed differences in only those [study participants] who underwent mindfulness meditation. There was more activity, or communication, among the portions of their brains that process stress-related reactions and other areas related to focus and calm. Four months later, those who had practiced mindfulness showed much lower levels in their blood of a marker of unhealthy inflammation than the relaxation group, even though few were still meditating.”

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has been taking a closer look, too, and confirms meditation may provide health benefits. However, HHS cautions meditation should not replace conventional care.¹¹

Quiz Answers:

1. **D** – All of the above
2. **A** – A plane that folds into a car
3. **D** – All of the above
4. **A** – MTV was invented in the 1980s. All of the rest were invented in the 1960s.

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¹ <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0519-irs-impacts-registered-broker-dealer>

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- ² <http://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-2015/phony-irs-scams.html>
- ³ <https://www.irs.gov/uac/Newsroom/Phone-Scams-Continue-to-be-a-Serious-Threat,-Remain-on-IRS-Dirty-Dozen-List-of-Tax-Scams-for-the-2016-Filing-Season>
- ⁴ <http://www.nutrition-and-you.com/arugula.html>
- ⁵ <http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/roasted-asparagus-arugula-salad/print>
- ⁶ <http://lemelson.mit.edu/news/high-school-teams-awarded-lemelson-mit-inventeam%E2%84%A2-grant-invention-projects>
- ⁷ <http://www.popsoci.com/tags/2015-invention-awards>
- ⁸ <http://www.american-historama.org/1913-1928-ww1-prohibition-era/inventions-in-the-1920s.htm>
- ⁹ <http://science.howstuffworks.com/innovation/inventions/5-cool-inventions-from-the-1980s.htm>
- ¹⁰ http://inventors.about.com/od/timelines/a/modern_2.htm
- ¹¹ <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm#hed3>
- ¹² http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/02/18/contemplation-therapy/?_r=0

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