

ASPARAGUS SOUP (Renaissance, Aspen)

2 whole leeks
2 tbsp olive oil
1 medium onion, sliced
3 pounds fresh asparagus
1-1/2 quarts chicken stock
2 medium baking potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped
3 garlic cloves
1 tbsp salt
4 ounces fresh spinach, rinsed and stems removed
Pinch of cayenne pepper
½ cup 2% milk

PREPARATION:

Remove two thirds of the green part of the leeks, and slit the remaining portion down the side. Rinse to remove any dirt or grit and chop roughly. Heat oil in soup kettle, add onions and leeks, and cook over low heat until wilted.

Remove and discard tough ends from asparagus; cut off about 2 inches of the tips and set aside. Place remaining middle sections of asparagus stalks in kettle and cook for 5 minutes. Add chicken stock, potatoes, garlic, and salt. Simmer for 45 minutes. Add half of the reserved asparagus tips and cook an additional 5 minutes. Remove from heat.

In small sauce pan, bring 2 cups of water to a boil, add remaining asparagus tips and cook 3 minutes. Remove with slotted spoon and set aside for garnish. In same water repeat cooking procedure for the spinach, then drain and add to soup. Puree soup in small batches in a blender or food processor. Strain and season to taste with salt and cayenne. Return soup to kettle, add milk, and heat thoroughly.

Pour into bowls (or tureen) and garnish with reserved asparagus tips.

SERVES: 12

PREPARATION: 10 minutes

COOK TIME: 1 hour