



Cream of Asparagus Soup

1 tbs. unsalted butter

2 tbs. olive oil

2 leeks, white and light green parts, finely chopped

1 lb. (500 g.) thick asparagus, trimmed, peeled and cut into 2-inch (5-cm.) pieces, tips reserved

1 russet potato, peeled and cut into 2-inch (5-cm.) chunks

4 cups (32 fl. oz./1 l.) vegetable or chicken broth

Salt and ground white pepper

Juice of 1/2 lemon

3 Tbs. crème fraîche or sour cream

1 tbs. finely chopped chives

In a large, heavy pot, melt the butter with the oil over medium heat. Add the leeks and saute until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the asparagus stalks and potato and saute until beginning to soften, about 3 minutes. Add the broth and season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to low, cover partially, and cook until the vegetables are very tender, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, bring a small saucepan of water to a boil. Add the lemon juice and reserved asparagus tips and cook until crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Drain and let cool slightly.

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Working in batches, puree the soup in a blender. Return to the pot and reheat over low heat. Serve, garnished with the crème fraîche, asparagus tips, and chives. Serves 4-6.

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