

## **Chilled Asparagus and Pea Soup**

4 generous servings

### **Ingredients**

Vegetable stock (if making from scratch):

6 cups water  
4 stalks celery  
3 large carrots  
1 large leek, well cleaned  
1 large onion, quartered, studded with 2 cloves  
1 clove garlic  
1 bay leaf  
Large sprig thyme  
6 or more parsley stalks  
6 peppercorns

Soup:

1 lb fresh asparagus  
2 cups frozen or fresh young peas (defrost if frozen)  
1 tbs fresh mint leaves, minced finely  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste  
½ cup light cream

To prepare vegetable stock: rinse and chop celery, carrots, and leek into uniform pieces. Boil in large saucepan of water with onion, bay leaf, garlic, thyme, parsley, and peppercorns. Simmer for 1 hour, or until vegetables are soft, making sure to skim any impurities from the surface. Strain and discard solids. There should be 4 cups of stock. (Alternatively use 4 cups of high-quality, unsalted store-bought stock).

Snap bottom of asparagus stalks, discarding woody stems; rinse. Boil 3 cups of vegetable stock in saucepan with generous pinch of salt. Add asparagus and boil until just tender-crisp, no more than 2 minutes. Remove with slotted spoon and plunge into bowl of cold water. Reserve the asparagus stock. Cut about 1 ½ inches off tips of asparagus spears and reserve for garnish.

Return stock to a boil; cut remaining asparagus stalks into inch-long pieces. Add to stock and simmer until fork tender. Add peas, bring back to a boil, simmer for a minute until all vegetables are soft. With an immersion blender, purée the vegetables and stock to make a very smooth soup. Add additional stock to thin the soup to taste. Season with salt and pepper. When soup is cold, stir in cream and mint. Serve chilled, garnished with asparagus tips.