

## CREAMY ASPARAGUS SOUP

NOTE: Look for asparagus spears that are no more than ½ inch thick. If using thicker spears use a vegetable peeler to peel the length of the spears before cooking to ensure a silky soup.

2 bunches thin asparagus tough ends trimmed  
2 leeks, white and light green parts only halved lengthwise, sliced thin and rinsed thoroughly  
1 Tbs unsalted butter  
salt & pepper  
3 ½ cups low sodium chicken broth  
½ cup frozen peas (2 oz)  
2 Tbs grated Parmesan cheese  
¼ cup half & half  
½ tsp fresh lemon juice

Cut the tips off the asparagus spears and chop the remaining spears into ½ inch pieces. Bring ½ cup water to a boil in an 8 inch skillet over medium high heat. Add the asparagus tips, cover and cook until the tips are tender (about 2 minutes). Remove the asparagus tips, pat dry and set aside.

Combine the remaining asparagus pieces, leeks, butter, salt and 1/8 tsp pepper in a large saucepan. Cover & cook over medium low heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, (8 to 10 minutes).

Add the broth to the pot, bring to a simmer, and cook until the vegetables are completely tender (about 5 minutes). Stir in the peas and Parmesan.

Working in 2 batches, process the soup in a blender until completely smooth, (2 to 3 minutes).

Return the soup to the pot. Stir in the reserved asparagus tips, half & half and lemon juice and cook until heated through (about 2 minutes). Season with salt & pepper to taste and serve.

(tip: the peas give the soup a boost of green colour)