

## **Chilled Spring Asparagus Soup with Crème Fraîche and Chives**

*makes approximately 9 cups, serving 6*

2 large leeks, roots and dark green tops removed and discarded  
2 pounds asparagus, trimmed of tough ends  
3 tablespoons canola oil  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper  
6 cups low-sodium chicken stock  
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil  
8 ounces frozen peas, thawed  
1 cup lightly packed parsley leaves  
zest of a lemon  
1/2 cup heavy cream, divided  
4 ounces crème fraîche  
minced fresh chives, for garnish  
chive oil, optional

Slice leeks in half lengthwise, rinse under cool, running water to remove dirt and grit, then chop.

Cut tips from asparagus and reserve. Chop remaining stalks into 1-inch pieces.

Heat canola oil in a large pot over medium-low heat. Cook leeks, stirring occasionally, until softened but not browned, 5 -7 minutes. Add chopped asparagus stalks, garlic, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper, sautéing until asparagus is crisp tender, about five minutes more.

Pour in chicken stock, add 2 teaspoons kosher salt, then bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook for 10-15 minutes until asparagus is completely softened. Stir in peas and remove from heat.

Meanwhile, prepare an ice bath by filling a large bowl with ice water and placing a colander in it. Bring a small pot of water to a boil (you will be blanching the asparagus tips first, then the parsley leaves, so do not discard water from ice bath or small pot). Add a big pinch of salt and the asparagus tips to the boiling water, cooking for 2-3 minutes. Remove from pot with a spider or slotted spoon and place in ice bath until cooled. Drain and place in a small bowl, tossing with olive oil and a pinch of kosher salt.

Add parsley leaves to boiling water and blanch for 30-45 seconds. Remove from pot with spider or slotted spoon and place in the ice bath immediately to retain bright green color. Drain and set aside.

After removing soup from heat, purée in batches in a blender with the blanched parsley, then strain soup through a mesh sieve into a large bowl and whisk in lemon zest. Test for seasoning, adding more salt and pepper if needed. Cover and chill for at least two hours and up to overnight.

Just before serving, whisk 3 tablespoons heavy cream into chilled soup.

Place crème fraîche in a small bowl and thin with 1 tablespoon cream, whisking to reach the consistency of a drizzle that falls in thick but continual ribbons from a spoon. You may need to add 1-2 additional tablespoons to reach desired consistency.

Ladle soup into shallow bowls. Drizzle each with crème fraîche mixture and garnish with asparagus tips and chopped chives. Add droplets of chive oil, if desired. Serve immediately. Pair with a crisp sauvignon blanc or a dry Riesling.

*a **fletcher + fork** recipe*