Cream of Asparagus Soup

Before you get started, there are a couple of things to note: asparagus come in various thicknesses which will result in different cooking times. Generally speaking, the thicker stalks are better for broiling, grilling, and roasting, as they stand up to the heat better. Taste wise, there is very little difference.

Ingredients:

- 2 TBSP butter
- 1 TBSP olive oil
- 1 tsp of salt
- Pinch of black pepper
- ½ c whole milk
- ½ cup of heavy cream
- I cup of pureed 2% small curd cottage cheese (culinary hack listed below)
- 2 cups of chicken stock
- 1 medium leek white part only, rinsed very well (see note below) and chopped into half moon shapes
- 1 lb of fresh asparagus, woody end removed and cut into 1" pieces.

Step 1:
Rinsed leek very well (see note below) and chopped into half-moon shapes

Step 2:
Remove woody end of asparagus and cut into 1" pieces. Set the tips aside.

Step 3:
Saute the leeks and asparagus in the butter and olive oil for 2 minutes over medium heat. Add the chicken stock.

Step 4:
Simmer until the asparagus is fork tender*. This will depend on how thick your asparagus is.

Step 5:
Remove the center bit of the blender cap. This will to allow steam to escape when blending.
Once cooked, carefully pour the leeks, asparagus, and chicken stock mixture into the blender.
Carefully blend the mixture on low at first, loosely covering the top (you want the steam to escape but be careful to cover loosely to avoid getting burned by the hot liquid) and gradually increase the blend speed until well blended

Step 6:
Take a ladle full of soup and blend with the pureed cottage cheese and then put both liquids in the pan. Add the milk and cream mixture. Reheat on low.

Step 7:
Pour into soup bowl and garnish with parsley & asparagus tips.

Cook's Notes:

You can use a ½ cup of chopped onion in place of a leek. Since leeks are notoriously sandy, it's important to rinse them very well. I do this by filling a bowl with cold water, & place the sliced leeks into it. Gently agitate the water thus causing the dirt to shake loose and fall to the bottom of the bowl of water. Remove the leeks with a slotted spoon onto a paper towel and pat dry.

You can substitute sour cream for the pureed cottage cheese, but I wanted to cut back on the fat calories, and increase the protein factor.

*Fork tender simply means the cooked item falls off the fork when pierced

Serving suggestions:
With an open-faced ham and Swiss cheese sandwich

Buon Appetito!

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