

## **Cream of Asparagus Soup**

- \* 1 pound fresh asparagus, cut in 1-inch pieces (set tips aside)
- \* 1/2 cup chopped onion
- \* 1/4 cup chopped celery
- \* 2 T. butter
- \* 4 cups chicken stock
- \* 1 cup milk
- \* 1/2 cup light cream
- \* 1½ T. flour
- \* 1/4 tsp. salt
- \* 1/8 tsp. paprika pepper to taste (optional)

Melt butter in large saucepan. Add onions and celery and sauté over medium heat until onions are translucent. Add chicken stock and asparagus stalks. Bring to boil, then reduce heat and simmer about 1/2 hour, until stalks are soft. Remove from heat and process in batches in a blender; return to saucepan and set aside.

In a small pan, combine milk and asparagus tips. Bring to boil, then reduce heat and simmer until tips are tender; remove from heat. Strain tips, reserving milk; set tips aside. Using a small whisk, combine flour with reserved milk to make a roux, whisking until there are no lumps. Return saucepan with blended asparagus to medium heat, and when steaming, add a small amount of asparagus mixture to the roux and whisk well.

Gradually add tempered roux to saucepan, stirring constantly. Add cream, salt, paprika and pepper; blend well. Heat until soup thickens slightly, about 8 to 10 minutes. Add asparagus tips, heat another 1 to 2 minutes, then remove from heat. Serve immediately, topped with croutons or a dollop of sour cream.

Serves 6 to 8.