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Hearty Soups a Menu Favorite

Cool days of late winter and early spring certainly make hearty soups a menu favorite! One of the most interesting ways to enjoy a traditional potato soup is to mix it up with early spring garden vegetables such as new potatoes and asparagus!

New potatoes can be any variety of potato harvested in the spring or early summer when they are small in size with thin, tender skin. Because of this tender skin, new potatoes are generally prepared without peeling. Red and yellow potatoes have a higher moisture content and are known as “waxy” types that are best boiled for us in dishes such as scalloped potatoes, soups or potato salads, or even served whole. Ideally, new potatoes are stored in a cool, humid, well-ventilated, dark place. Exposure to light and high temperatures will cause the potato to sprout and shrive! The best temperature for storage is 45 degrees Fahrenheit. Lower temperatures or refrigeration will turn the starch into sugar, causing the potato to darken when cooked. Green potatoes and sprouts contain a chemical that is not safe to eat and should be peeled or discarded. Select potatoes free of wrinkles, green spots or bruises. New potatoes are a good source of Vitamin B and C, potassium and complex carbohydrates and have only 70 calories in a ½ cup serving.

Asparagus is also a good source of Vitamin A and folate, with one-half cup containing only 22 calories per serving! When choosing asparagus, select bright green stalks with tightly closed tips. The most tender stalks are apple green color with purple tinged tips. One pound of asparagus will yield 4 ½ cup servings – about six spears per serving. Asparagus will keep 1-2 weeks in the refrigerator, with cut ends wrapped in wet paper towels in a plastic bag.

This hearty soup combines both early spring favorites in a delicious creamy broth with a unique twist.....

New Potato Asparagus Soup

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 medium size, boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1 medium diced onion

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon garlic powder

2 cups new potatoes

3 cups vegetable broth

1 cup low fat milk

1 pound fresh asparagus

½ cup reduced fat sour cream

Zest and Juice of 1 lemon

Fresh ground black pepper

Directions:

Pour oil into a large saucepan over medium heat.

Remove fat from chicken breast and cut chicken into ½ inch pieces. Cook chicken and diced onion in the oil for about 5 minutes or until chicken is done and onions are golden. Stir in salt, garlic powder, lemon zest, and ½ of the lemon juice. Cut potatoes into ½ - inch chunks, leaving the skin on. Add potatoes and vegetable broth then simmer, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are tender. Stir in the milk. Trim and cut asparagus into 1 inch pieces and add to mixture. Simmer over medium heat, partially covered and cook until the asparagus is tender, about 15 minutes. Stir in ½ cup sour cream and season with salt and pepper to taste.

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