



## Cream of Asparagus Soup with Soft Poached Egg

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Serves 8

### Ingredients:

2 ½ lbs. thin fine asparagus  
9 cups good vegetable or chicken broth  
1 tsp. white wine vinegar  
8 large, really fresh free-range eggs  
½ cup unsalted butter  
10 ½ oz. leeks, white part only, trimmed and thinly sliced  
4 small celery stalks, thinly sliced  
4 tbsp. all-purpose flour  
2 ½ tbsp. heavy cream  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

### Directions:

1. Rinse the asparagus, snap off the woody ends, and coarsely chop them. Put the chopped ends in a pan with the stock, bring to a boil, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Strain, discarding the ends, and set the stock aside.
2. Meanwhile, cut the tips off the asparagus spears and halve lengthwise. Coarsely chop the remaining stalks.
3. Bring 2 small pans of lightly salted water to a boil. Drop the asparagus tips into one pan and cook for 2 minutes until just tender. Drain, refresh under cold water, and set aside. Add the vinegar to the second pan and lower the heat. Swirl the water with a spoon to make a whirlpool, crack in an egg, and poach for 3 minutes, then carefully remove with a slotted spoon and set aside on paper towels. Repeat with the remaining eggs, leaving the water to simmer.
4. Melt 3-1/2 tablespoons of the butter in a large pan, add the asparagus stalks, sliced leeks and celery, cover, and cook over low heat for 10 minutes until soft but not browned.
5. Uncover, stir in the flour and cook for another minute. Stir in the asparagus-flavored broth, cover again, and simmer for 10 minutes until the veg are tender. Remove from the heat, cool slightly, then blend the soup in batches until smooth. Pass through a strainer back into a clean pan, bring back to a simmer, and stir in the cream. Season to taste.
6. Melt the remaining butter. Lower the eggs back into the simmering water and leave for 30 seconds.
7. Remove and drain on paper towels. Ladle the soup into warmed bowls and scatter over the asparagus tips. Place a poached egg into each bowl, season to taste, drizzle over the melted butter, and serve.