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Asparagus Cream Soup

Asparagus is full of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. It has been cultivated around the world for centuries, dating as far back as ancient Egypt. What's the secret to tender asparagus? Using a paring knife, cut a half-inch off the bottom of the stalk. If it cuts easily, it will be tender. If it resists cutting, try again a half-inch higher until you find the place where it can be sliced easily.

This soup is light, healthy and tasty. It's great for a spring lunch or light supper. Try topping it with spicy croutons, and maybe a dollop of soy sour cream.

2 Tbs. olive oil
1/2 large yellow onion, diced (about 2/3 cup)
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 15-oz. cans vegetable broth
3 carrots, peeled and diced
2 stalks celery, diced
2 bunches of medium-size asparagus (about 7 cups, when chopped into 1-inch pieces)
1 cup baby spinach leaves, chopped
6 to 8 mushrooms, chopped
1/2 cup fresh Italian flat-leaf parsley, chopped
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 cup unsweetened soy milk

1. Sauté onion and garlic in olive oil over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until onion is transparent (about 5 minutes). Add broth, carrots, celery, and asparagus. Reduce heat. Simmer on medium-low for 30 minutes.

2. Add spinach, mushrooms, parsley, and salt. Simmer another 30 minutes.

3. Turn off heat and add soy milk; stir. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Serve with croutons and a dollop of soy sour cream (if desired).