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MARCH

CHILLED POTATO & LEEK SOUP

serves 4

- 4 leeks, white part only, chopped
- 4 large green onions, white part only, chopped
- 3 cups (24 fl oz/750 ml) chicken broth
- 1 lb (500 g) Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1½ Tbsp unsalted butter
- Salt and ground white pepper
- 2 Tbsp minced chives

In a large, heavy pot over medium-high heat, combine the leeks, the green onions, and ½ cup (4 fl oz/125 ml) of the broth. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook until the vegetables have wilted and begin to soften, about 8 minutes. Add the potatoes and remaining 2½ cups (20 fl oz/625 ml) broth, cover, and cook until the vegetables are very soft, 25–30 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes. Stir in the butter.

Working in batches, purée the soup in a blender. Return to the pot. Stir in ¼ tsp salt and season with pepper. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled, 3–4 hours or up to overnight. The soup will thicken and become very creamy. Serve, garnished with the chives.

This is a lighter version of the classic vichyssoise. It delivers the buttery flavor of the original by using yellow-fleshed potatoes and just a modest amount of butter.

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MARCH

CHICKPEA & ROASTED TOMATO SOUP WITH FRIED ROSEMARY

serves 4–6

- 1 lb (500 g) Roma (plum) tomatoes
- 4 Tbsp olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp paprika
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 3 cans (15 oz/470 g each) chickpeas, drained
- 4 cups (32 fl oz/1 l) chicken broth
- 1 Tbsp sour cream
- Fried Rosemary for garnish (see note)

Preheat the oven to 450°F (230°C). Slice the tomatoes in half and place in a single layer on a baking sheet. Drizzle with 2 Tbsp of the oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast the tomatoes until they are soft and caramelized, 25–30 minutes. Set aside.

In a large, heavy pot, warm the remaining 2 Tbsp oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion and the garlic and sauté until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the cumin, paprika, and cinnamon stick and toast the spices, stirring often, for 2 minutes. Add the chickpeas, roasted tomatoes, and broth, stir to combine, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the chickpeas are very tender, about 45 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly.

Transfer about two-thirds of the chickpeas and broth to a blender and purée. Return to the pot and stir in the sour cream.

Season the soup with salt and pepper and serve, garnished with fried rosemary.

To make the fried rosemary, in a small frying pan, warm 2 Tbsp olive oil over high heat. Add 4 sprigs rosemary, 2 at a time, and fry for 1 minute on each side. Transfer to paper towels to drain. Once they are cool enough to handle, remove the leaves and chop, if desired.