

Carrot-Leek Soup with Tarragon and a touch of cream

This soup is one of my new favorites. I recently rediscovered tarragon after a long separation, and it adds a subtle but welcome herbal note to this super-simple, gently-flavored soup. A swirl of sour cream lends sophistication and richness.

Makes about 8 cups

1/4 cup olive oil

2 leeks, white and light green parts only, quartered lengthwise then roughly chopped

1-1/2 pounds carrots (about 4 to 6 medium), peeled, quartered lengthwise, and roughly chopped

1 russet potato, peeled, diced

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Two 14-1/2 ounce cans low-sodium chicken broth

1/2 teaspoon dried tarragon, plus additional for garnish

2 tablespoons sour cream, plus additional for garnish

2 teaspoons fresh lime juice

Heat oil in a large soup pot over medium heat. Add leeks, carrots, diced potato, and a good sprinkling of salt and pepper, and cook for about 15 minutes, stirring frequently.

Slowly add the chicken broth and the equivalent of 1 can of cold water (just shy of 2 cups). Add the tarragon and raise the heat to high. Bring the soup to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer, partially cover, and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the vegetables are all tender. Remove from the heat.

If you have an immersion blender, use it to puree the soup. (Otherwise, allow to cool slightly and then puree in batches in a traditional blender. Return soup to the pot.) Swirl in two tablespoons of the sour cream and the lime juice, and adjust the salt and pepper, if necessary. Top each serving with a dollop of sour cream and garnish with a sprinkling of additional tarragon, if desired.