

Thai Pea Soup

6 cups vegetable broth, more as needed
1 cup chopped onions
4 garlic cloves, finely minced
2 teaspoons green curry paste
8 cups shelled peas (thawed if using frozen)
Salt and pepper, as needed
1 teaspoon lightly toasted mustard seeds
1/4 cup chopped mint

Add about 1/2 cup of the broth to a soup pit and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Add the onions, garlic and curry paste. Saute, stirring frequently, until the onions are softened and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the remaining broth to the pot and bring to a boil. Add the peas, cover the soup and simmer over low heat for 10 minutes.

Remove the pot from the heat and let the soup cool for at least 10 minutes before pureeing with a blender. Strain the soup through a sieve and reserve the liquid if you are using a counter top blender or food processor. Add the solids to the blender jar or food processor; do not overfill. Add a little of the liquid, replace the cover and puree until smooth. Add more liquid if necessary to help puree the solids. Transfer the pureed soup to a clean pot. Continue until all of the solids are pureed.

Blend the soup and adjust the consistency by adding some of the remaining reserved liquid. Return the soup to a simmer over low heat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve the soup garnished with the toasted mustard seeds and chopped mint. Serves 8.

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Asparagus with Shiitakes, Bow Tie Pasta and Spring Peas

3 pounds asparagus, peeled and trimmed
3 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and pepper as needed
1 cup snow peas
1 cup sugar snap peas
2 cups frozen green peas
2 cups dried bowtie pasta
1 tablespoon butter
3 cups sliced shiitake mushrooms
3 tablespoons shallots, minced
3 tablespoons chopped marjoram
2 bunches scallion, split lengthwise, thinly slices
Parmesan, shaved, to taste

Bring a medium saucepan of salted water to a boil to blanch the peas and bring a large pot of salted water to boil to cook the pasta. Preheat the broiler.

Toss the asparagus with the oil and one teaspoon of salt. Place in a baking pan under the broiler, turning occasionally, until tender and lightly browned, about 8 minutes. Slice the asparagus on a diagonal into 1-inch pieces and reserve.

Cook each type of pea separately in the boiling water using a slotted spoon or small strainer and rinse with cold water to stop the cooking. Drain well and reserve.

Cook the pasta in boiling water until tender to the bite, about 10 to 12 minutes. Drain well, reserving some of the pasta water to adjust the temperature of the dish.

Heat the butter in a saute pan until it begins to turn brown. Add the shiitakes and shallots and saute until they are light brown. Add the asparagus, green peas, snow peas and sugar snap peas, marjoram, 1 teaspoon salt and a pinch of pepper. Saute while stirring or tossing, until the vegetables are thoroughly heated. Add the hot pasta and toss the pasta with the cooked vegetables and scallions until evenly blended. Add a little of the pasta water to moisten the dish if necessary. Serve on heated plates and top with Parmesan.

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