

## ASPARAGUS SPINACH AND SPRING ONION BISQUE, WITH CORTIINA-INSPIRED BACON STICKS

### INGREDIENTS

for the Soup

2 tablespoons butter or extra-virgin olive oil  
1 1/2 cups finely chopped spring onions (white and green parts)  
Pinch finely ground salt  
4 cups chicken stock  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
2 pounds asparagus, tough ends removed, chopped  
2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh thyme leaves  
4 cups tightly packed fresh spinach leaves  
1 cup heavy cream, chilled  
juice and freshly grated zest of 1 lemon

for the bacon sticks

6-8 lardons breakfast bacon

You will also need 6-8 12-inch bamboo skewers

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375F and line a baking sheet with silpat or parchment paper. Carefully and tightly wrap bamboo skewers with bacon, leaving a 3-4 inch "handle" bacon-free. Place on prepared baking sheet and bake for 10-15 minutes until crispy. Note that they will likely stick to the parchment or silpat, so don't try to move them. Once crispy, remove from the oven and gently remove to a wire rack (I used a knife to jiggle them off). You may want to dab off any extra bacon grease with a paper towel (depends on how streaky your bacon is). Let cool while you prepare the soup.

Heat the butter or olive oil in a large saucepan over high heat. Add the spring onions and stir to coat. Lower the heat and add a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are soft and translucent, about 10 minutes, but do not brown. Add the chicken stock. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to a simmer. Add the chopped asparagus and thyme. Cook until the asparagus is just tender.

Strain away about half of the cooking liquid, reserving in a bowl (you may need to add some back in). Add the spinach to the remaining soup, and quickly purée using an immersion blender. Purée until the soup is totally smooth, with no shreds of spinach remaining. You may add back cooking liquid a little at a time until the soup reaches the desired consistency. You may also use a blender, working in batches, blending until the soup reaches an even consistency. Add the cream, lemon juice and zest, and season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately, garnished with the bacon sticks.