

SOUTHWESTERN CORN AND POTATO SOUP

SERVES 6 (MAIN COURSE)

ACTIVE TIME: 20 MIN START TO FINISH: 35 MIN

Enriched with coarsely mashed potatoes, this lively soup makes for an easy supper. Serve the accompaniments in separate bowls for an interactive touch.

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 fresh jalapeño, seeded and finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1½ lb large yellow-fleshed potatoes such as Yukon Gold (about 2)
- 3¼ cups reduced-sodium chicken broth (26 fl oz)
- 1 cup water
- 1 (10-oz) package frozen corn (not thawed)
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro

ACCOMPANIMENTS: ½-inch cubes of California avocado; chopped fresh cilantro; tortilla chips; lime wedges

► Heat oil in a 5- to 6-quart heavy pot over moderate heat until hot but not smoking, then cook onion, jalapeño, salt, and pepper, stirring occasionally, until onion is pale golden, about 8 minutes.

In this refreshing potato soup, corn and lime juice provide sweetness and a burst of tang.

- Meanwhile, peel potatoes and cut into 1-inch pieces.
- Add broth, water, and potatoes to onion mixture and cover pot, then bring to a boil over high heat.
- Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are very tender, 12 to 14 minutes.
- Coarsely mash potatoes in pot with a potato masher. Stir in corn and simmer, uncovered, 3 minutes.
- Stir in lime juice, cilantro, and salt to taste.

ASPARAGUS GRATIN

SERVES 6 (SIDE DISH)

ACTIVE TIME: 25 MIN START TO FINISH: 25 MIN

No other vegetable signals spring like asparagus. In this recipe, it makes for a rich, creamy side dish that's beyond delicious. We love it with a simple roast chicken.

- 2 lb asparagus, trimmed and cut diagonally into 1½-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into bits
- ½ cup finely chopped shallots (about 2 large)
- 4 slices firm white sandwich bread, cut into ¼-inch pieces
- ¼ cup pine nuts (1¼ oz)

- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 oz finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (1 cup; see Tips, page 184)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup mascarpone cheese

- Butter a 2- to 2½-quart shallow ceramic flameproof baking dish.
- Cook asparagus in a 5- to 6-quart pot of boiling salted water (see Tips, page 184), uncovered, until crisp-tender, about 4 minutes. Drain in a colander, then transfer to baking dish and keep warm, tightly covered with foil.
- Meanwhile, heat oil and butter in a 12-inch heavy skillet over high heat until foam subsides, then cook shallots, stirring occasionally, until pale golden, about 3 minutes. Add bread and pine nuts and cook, stirring, until browned in spots, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and add pepper, ½ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano, and ¼ teaspoon salt, tossing to combine.
- Preheat broiler.
- Toss warm asparagus with mascarpone, remaining ½ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt until combined well.
- Sprinkle bread-crumble mixture evenly over asparagus. Broil 5 to 7 inches from heat until topping is golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes.

For more EVERY DAY recipes, see page 98.

