

Creamy Minted Sweet Pea Soup

2 leeks, outer layers removed
1 tablespoon vinegar
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 packages (10-oz each) frozen peas, thawed
8 cups chicken broth
1 cup fresh mint leaves
1 cup heavy (whipping) cream
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon white pepper
2 drops Tabasco sauce
Fresh chives for garnish

1. Trim the roots and all but 2 in. of green from the leeks; halve lengthwise. Place in a bowl; add the vinegar and enough water to cover; soak for 30 min to remove dirt. Carefully remove the leeks, rinse and pat dry. Chop coarsely.
2. Melt the butter with the oil in a large, heavy pot over medium low heat. Add leeks and cook until softened, about 12 min, stirring occasionally.
3. Add peas and broth to the pot; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to med-low and simmer, partially covered, for 15 min. Add mint and cool slightly.
4. Puree soup in batches until smooth.
5. Add the cream and season with salt and pepper.

To serve cold, cover and chill well in the refrigerator. To serve hot, reheat gently; do not boil. Garnish each portion with a dollop of crème fraîche (optional) sprinkled with fresh chives. Serves 8 (13 cups liquid) Per serving: 90 calories, 24 g carbohydrates, 9 g protein, 18 g fat, 55 mg cholesterol.