

TARRAGON AND PEA SOUP

2 teaspoons butter

1 onion, finely chopped

2 leeks, finely chopped

1½ tablespoons white rice

500g frozen peas

1 litre water

1 chicken or vegetable stock cube

½ teaspoon dried tarragon

Salt and pepper

Croutons to garnish

Melt the butter in a large pan over a medium-low heat. Add the onion, leeks and rice. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes until the vegetables are softened. Add the peas, water, stock cube and tarragon and bring just to the boil. Season with a little pepper. Cover and simmer gently, stirring occasionally, for about 35 minutes until the vegetables are very tender. Allow the soup to cool slightly, then transfer to a blender or food processor and process to a smooth purée, in batches if necessary. (If using a food processor, strain off the cooking liquid and reserve. Purée the soup solids with enough cooking liquid to moisten them, then combine with the remaining liquid). Return the soup to the pan. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Gently reheat the soup over a low heat for about 10 minutes until hot. Ladle into warm bowls and garnish with croutons.