

1/4 cup unsalted butter

4 cups thinly slice spring onions -- tender tops also

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

2 cups chicken stock

2 cups milk -- plus 2 tablespoons

1 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon fresh ground pepper

2 bunches watercress sprigs -- stems removed

2 tablespoons heavy cream

1. Melt butter in large sauce pan over medium heat. When foam subsides, add onions, saute until wilted about 4 minutes. Reduce heat to low. Cover pan, saute onions stirring occasionally,, until tender about 15 minutes. (Do not allow onions to brown) Sprinkle flour over onions, cook, stirring constantly, about 4 minutes.

2. Heat chicken stock, milk, salt and pepper in medium saucepan to simmering. Gradually whisk stock mixture into onion mixture. simmer, stirring constantly until soup begins to thicken, about 5 minutes. Simmer, covered, stirring occasionally. 20 minutes. Puree soup in batches in food processor or blender until smooth.

3. While soup is simmering, plunge watercress into large saucepan of simmering water. Cook 30 seconds. Drain, Squeeze to extract all moisture, combine in blender with 2 tablespoons milk, puree until completely smooth. Add cream, process only long enough to blend.

4. Ladle soup into heated soup bowls. Add watercress puree to soup. Swirling the green cream against the white soup with small spoon.

Tip: 2 1/2 cups sliced leeks (white parts only) plus 1 1/2 cup sliced green onions can be used.