

Leek and Potato Gratin

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, more to grease pan
- 2 large leeks, trimmed and halved lengthwise
- 1 ½ pounds peeled Yukon Gold potatoes
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 fat garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
- ¾ cup Gruyere, grated

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees and butter a 2-quart gratin dish. Wash the leeks to remove any grit and slice thinly crosswise.
2. Slice the potatoes into rounds, 1/8-inch thick. Toss with 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Layer the rounds in the gratin dish.
3. Melt the 2 tablespoons butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add leeks, remaining salt and pepper, and thyme. Cook, stirring, until leeks are tender and golden, 5 to 7 minutes. Discard thyme and scatter the leeks over the potatoes.
4. Add cream, garlic and bay leaf to the skillet, scraping up browned bits of leeks from the bottom of the pan. Simmer gently for 5 minutes. Stir in nutmeg.
5. Pour the cream over the leeks and potatoes and top with the Gruyere. Cover with aluminum foil and transfer to the oven. Bake for 40 minutes, uncover and bake until the cheese is bubbling and golden, 15 to 20 minutes longer. Let cool slightly before serving.

Baked Penne with Farmhouse Cheddar and Leeks

- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter
- 5 cups chopped leeks
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 3 ½ cups whole milk
- 1 pound extra-sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon hot pepper sauce
- 2 large eggs
- 1 pound penne pasta

Lightly butter 15x10x2-inch baking dish. Melt ¼ cup butter in heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add leeks; stir to coat. Cover saucepan and cook until leeks are tender, stirring occasionally; about 12 minutes (do not brown). Uncover saucepan; add flour. Stir 2 minutes. Add milk; bring to simmer, stirring often. Add cheese, mustard, and pepper sauce. Stir until cheese melts. Remove from heat. Season cheese sauce to taste with salt. Whisk eggs in medium bowl. Gradually whisk in 1 cup cheese sauce. Stir egg mixture into cheese sauce in saucepan. Meanwhile, cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain. Return to pot. Stir cheese sauce into pasta in pot. Transfer to prepared baking dish. DO AHEAD Can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature. Preheat oven to 400°F. Bake pasta until cheese sauce is bubbling around edges and some ends of pasta are golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Let stand 15 minutes.

Leek and Potato Soup

8 cups chicken stock
6 russet potatoes, peeled and cut into large pieces
4 leeks (whites only), thoroughly washed and sliced
3 stalks celery, roughly chopped
1 bay leaf
1 ½ teaspoons finely chopped fresh thyme
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1 cup heavy cream

Put the chicken stock, potatoes, leeks, celery, bay leaf and thyme in a large pot and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Boil until the potatoes are soft, 15 to 20 minutes.

Remove the bay leaf. Using an immersion blender (or in batches in a blender or food processor), blend the soup until smooth. Pour the soup into a medium pot; add the cream and simmer until the soup has thickened, about 20 minutes.

Leek and Mushroom Quiche

2 small leeks, trimmed, washed, and thoroughly cleaned
2 cups sliced mushrooms, brushed clean with stems removed
2 tablespoons butter
4 eggs
1/3 cup sour cream
2/3 cup whole milk
1 cup Gruyère, grated
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1/2 teaspoon fresh-ground pepper
Pie shell (homemade or store bought)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

In a medium skillet heat the butter over medium-high heat. Add the leeks and sauté for 7 minutes or until the leeks are slightly translucent. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, for another 5 minutes, or until the vegetables have released some juices.

Meanwhile, beat the eggs, sour cream, and milk in a medium bowl. Add the sautéed vegetables and stir. Add the Gruyère and stir. Place the quiche shell onto a rimmed baking sheet, gently pour the egg mixture into the shell. Bake for 30 – 35 minutes, or just until the quiche has set up in the center. Cool and Slice.

Chicken and Leek Casserole

olive oil, for cooking
8 chicken thighs, (with or without skin)
1 shallot, finely diced
3 medium sized leeks, washed and chopped into rounds
250g button mushrooms, diced
several stems fresh thyme, de-stalked
zest of half a lemon
1/3 cup dry white wine
1 cup chicken stock
¾ cup cream
salt and freshly ground black pepper
flat leaf parsley

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large based frying pan. Season the chicken with salt and black pepper. Brown on both sides until golden. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Add the shallot and leeks to the pan and sauté for several minutes or until softened. Add the mushrooms and cook on a medium-high heat until all the liquid has reduced. Season with salt, black pepper, thyme and lemon zest. Deglaze the pan with the wine. Reduce down by half and then add the chicken stock and cream. Return the chicken pieces to the pan, cover partially with a lid and simmer for about 40 minutes until the sauce has thickened and the chicken is cooked through. (I usually turn the chicken over once during the cooking time to ensure the flavors is evenly absorbed)

Roasted Leeks

4 large leeks
4 tbsp. olive oil
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

Clean the leeks thoroughly but leave the root end intact. Cut away the root fibers, but don't cut off the area where the leaves attach to the base of the stem. Trim away the tough, dark green tops. Split the leeks in half lengthwise. Check for any dirt that may be inside the leeks and rinse again if needed.

Preheat the oven to 475.

Place the leeks in a single layer in a casserole or baking dish. Drizzle with the olive oil and sprinkle with the salt, pepper, and chopped fresh parsley. Turn the leeks several times to coat all sides with the oil and seasonings.

Bake for 15-20 minutes, turning once, until the leeks begin to blacken.