

BAKED CHEESE GRITS

Adapted from *Louisiana Real & Rustic*

Cookbook by Emeril Lagasse

SERVES 8

Active time: 15 min Start to finish: 1½ hr

The grits mixture will almost fill the entire baking dish and will puff up when baking, but don't worry—it won't overflow.

Also, switching sides, these grits can take the place of mashed potatoes anytime.

6 cups water

2¼ teaspoons salt

2 cups yellow grits (not quick or instant; 12 oz; see Shopping List, page 262)

1 stick (½ cup) unsalted butter

½ teaspoon black pepper

2 tablespoons chopped garlic

½ lb Cheddar, coarsely grated (2 cups)

3 large eggs

1 cup whole milk

► Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 350°F.

► Bring water and ¾ teaspoon salt to a boil in a 4-quart heavy pot.

► Add grits in a slow stream, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and gently simmer, stirring frequently to avoid sticking, until very thick, about 30 minutes. (Use a long-handled spoon to avoid bubbling and popping hot grits.)

► Add butter, remaining 1½ teaspoons salt, pepper, garlic, and cheese, stirring until butter and cheese are melted. Lightly beat eggs and milk in a small bowl, then stir into grits until combined.

► Pour into an ungreased 8-inch square baking dish (2 inches deep) and bake until set and lightly browned, about 1 hour. Serve immediately.