

Potato, Leek & Chive Gratin

Serves 8-10

The technique in this recipe was inspired by cookbook author and French cooking expert Patricia Wells. Food & Wine staffer Amanda Gold suggested that we add a little complexity with leeks and chives. It's a great make-ahead dish that can be refrigerated the night before and reheated about 40 minutes before the big meal.

- 3 pounds russet potatoes**
- 2 cups whole milk**
- 2 cups water**
- 2 bay leaves**
- 3 heads garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped**
- Kosher salt, to taste**
- 1 to 2 medium leeks**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil**
- Ground black pepper, to taste**
- 1 bunch chives, minced**
- Freshly ground nutmeg, to taste**
- 1 cup creme fraiche**
- 1½ cups shredded Gruyere cheese**
- ¾ cup shredded Parmesan cheese**

Instructions: Peel and slice potatoes into 1/8-inch-thick rounds using a food processor, mandoline or by hand. Place the potatoes in a large saucepan and add the milk, water, bay leaves, garlic and a generous pinch of salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Lower heat and simmer potato slices until tender but not falling apart, about 20-25 minutes. Remove and discard bay leaf.

In the meantime, trim leeks, cut in half lengthwise and rinse well, then slice crosswise about 1/4-inch thick. You should have about 2 cups.

Warm the oil in a medium-size saute pan over medium heat. Add the leeks and salt and pepper to taste. Saute until the leeks become a golden brown, about 7-10 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Using a slotted spoon, layer



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a 13- by 9- by 2-inch Pyrex-type casserole dish with half of the potato slices, then top with half the sauteed leek mixture. Sprinkle with half the chives, then season with nutmeg and ground pepper to taste. Cover with half the creme fraiche, half the Gruyere and half the Parmesan. Repeat the layers with the remaining ingredients. Discard the leftover potato cooking liquid.

Loosely cover the baking dish with aluminum foil and bake 20 minutes. Remove the foil and bake approximately another 40 minutes, or until the gratin is brown on top. Serve immediately, or let cool and refrigerate. Reheat at 350° before serving.

Per serving: 281 calories, 11 g protein, 31 g carbohydrate, 13 g fat (7 g saturated), 32 mg cholesterol, 180 mg sodium, 3 g fiber.