

SCALLOPED LEEKS

Ingredients:

2 lbs. leeks
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
6 oz. *gruyère* cheese, grater
2 Tbsp. butter
2 Tbsp. flour
1 cup hot milk
1 small onion, minced
1 Tbsp. oil
1 pinch nutmeg

Remove and discard the green stems of the leeks and wash the rest well.¹ Boil them in salted water for 20 min. Drain and cut the leeks into rounds. Saute the onion in 1 Tbsp. oil until it becomes transparent. To prepare a Béchamel sauce, melt 2 Tbsp. butter. Mix in 2 Tbsp. flour, and continue cooking until the mixture detaches from the sides of the saucepan. Mix in the hot milk and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat, add salt and pepper, and the cheese, and stir until the cheese melts. Butter an ovenproof dish and arrange the leeks and onions in it. Pour the sauce on top. Sprinkle lightly with nutmeg. Bake in a 350-degree oven for 20 min.

ACTIVITIES

1. From what family of vegetables is the leek?
2. What other vegetables could be prepared *au gratin*?
3. Make several versions of this dish with different types of cheese and have a tasting. Which version is smoothest, most elastic, sweetest, sharpest, etc.?
4. Search on-line for other recipes with leeks. What category do they fit in? Soups? Vegetables? Appetizers?
5. Why is flour added to a sauce?

Notes

¹ How clean leeks are depends on how they were grown. Sometimes there is a lot of sand between the different layers. In this case, cut the leek lengthwise. Then it can be more easily rinsed between the layers.