

Gratin Bubbanois

We use a portmanteau to describe a favorite winter dish derived from France's gratin dauphinois. Baking hearty casseroles in the oven on cold evenings warms up the house and makes it smell delicious. This recipe should make two main course servings and hearty leftovers for lunch and dinner the next day.

Tools

Large, deep, ceramic or enameled cast iron casserole
Mixing bowl with at least the volume of casserole
Pepper grinder

Ingredients

2-3 small-to-medium onions, coarsely diced (or about 12 spring onions with greens from the garden)
Three strips bacon or lardons, finely diced
½ teaspoon any Hey Bubba brand salt that strikes your fancy (approx.)
1 teaspoon Herbes de Bubba
1 teaspoon ground dried mustard (optional)
One tablespoon dried porcini mushrooms (optional)
8 ounces leftover roast chicken, turkey, ham, or pork coarsely cut in strips (optional)
Three 4-8" long chicken, pork, or beef sausages cut in bite sized pieces (country, italian, andouille, kielbasa etc. as you please) (optional)
8 ounces aged sharp white cheddar cheese, sliced (or your favorite cheese or a mixture of those you have on hand)
Extra virgin olive oil or 1 tablespoon unsalted butter (as you please)
Potatoes (quantity will depend on casserole size). Start with a small bag of Yukon Gold or similar potatoes, well rinsed, with eyes and bad spots removed.
1 -2 small dried hot spice peppers like bird, fish, etc. finely chopped including seeds and membranes (optional, or to taste)
Splash of stock, white wine, and milk or cream (optional)

Method

Turn on oven to preheat at 385 degrees.
Set aside enough cheese slices to cover top of casserole. Place the first nine ingredients in mixing bowl, crumbling cheese as it is added. Grind a few twists of black pepper into the bowl. Stir until roughly mixed.

Lightly rub inside of casserole with extra virgin olive oil or butter.
Slice a potato or two into 1/8" slices (approx.). Place enough potato slices in bottom of casserole to cover.

Sprinkle a layer of the mixing bowl contents over the potatoes.
Repeat the previous two steps until casserole is almost full and mixing bowl is empty, taking care to distribute mixed ingredients evenly between sliced potato layers.
The last/top layer should be potatoes.
Arrange reserved cheese slices atop the last/top layer of potatoes in casserole.

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Position oven rack so the center of casserole is in the center of the oven.

Bake for about 1 - 1 1/2 hours. Adjust baking time for the size of your casserole. It's ready when the cheese on top is well browned and the potatoes and onions in the center are fork-tender. Let rest and cool on stovetop for at least 15 minutes before serving.

Variations

If you want to be fancy, sprinkle some bread crumbs over the cheese topping before baking.

Try slicing up a sweet potato and interspersing it with the regular potatoes.

Consider adding some greens, spinach, brussel sprouts, or turnips if you have them. Broccoli, carrots, and edamame are good, too.

Comments

Leave skins on potatoes for flavor and texture (unless this offends your delicate sensibilities).

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