

CHEESY SCALLOPED POTATOES

F EASY

Last Modified: 04/13/2014

PREP: 1 Hr
COOK: 2 Hrs
OVEN: 325

VEGETABLES

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

QUA	MEASURE	INGREDIENT	PROCESS
3	Pounds	Yukon Gold Potatoes	Thin Sliced
1	Small	Sweet Onion	Thin Slivers
1/2	Pound	Thin Sliced Bacon	1/4" Lardons
1	Cup	Heavy Cream	
1/2	Stick	Unsalted Butter	Softened
PLUS			
1	Tbsp	Unsalted Butter (Dish Coating)	Very Soft
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1	Tbsp	Unsalted Butter (Onion Saute)	
2 1/2	Cups	Whole Milk	
1	Tsp	Garlic	Minced
28	Oz	Gruyere Cheese (NOT Smoked)	Fine Shred
1 +/-	Pinches	Kosher Salt	To Taste
1 +/-	Pinches	Fresh Ground Black Pepper	To Taste
OR IF YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE THOSE BLACK SPECKLES			
1 +/-	Pinches	Ground White Pepper	To Taste
3	Tbsp	Corn Starch + 3 Tbsp Water	To Thicken

PREPARATION

FACTOID	This is my go-to recipe for Scalloped Potatoes. Creamy with an out of this world flavor.
CAUTION	To keep the Potato Slices from darkening and turning bitter (CAREFUL - they will do so within minutes after peeling & slicing), place them in a large bowl with enough ice cold water to cover them immediately as you slice them.
OPTION	Gruyere Cheese is a smooth melting, slightly nutty tasting (and relatively expensive) form of aged Swiss Cheese imported from Switzerland. You may substitute any high quality Swiss, Emmental, Jarlsberg, Beaufort, Comte or Raclette Cheeses instead.
TOOLS	1) 2 1/2 Quart Oval Ceramic Baking Dish. 2) Large Mixing Bowl. 3) Mandolin Slicer OR Food Processor (Thickness setting #2: 1/4" thick slices.). 4) Large Saucepan & Lid. 5) Large Colander.
PREP	DISH 1) Finely mince the Sweet Onion and set it aside. 2) Peel & thinly (About 1/16") Slice the Potatoes and set them aside. 3) Mince the Garlic Cloves and set them aside. 4) Cut The nearly frozen Bacon into 1/4" Lardons and set them aside. 5) Preheat the oven to 325 degrees with a rack in the lower third.
PREP	Shred the Gruyere Cheese and spread it evenly over the surface of a cutting board to allow it's flavors to fully develop in the air.

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PREP	Peel the Potatoes. Slice them as thinly as possible with the mandolin slicer set on it's thinnest setting. Separately drop each slice into the cold water, but do NOT Stir, you want the starch to remain on the outside to thicken the Sauce during baking.
PREP	LARDONS: Fry the Bacon Lardons in the saucepan over medium high heat until barely done, Pat the grease off of them and set them aside to cool. Discard the Bacon Grease
1	CREAM BASE: Place the Onions in the saucepan over medium heat with 1 tablespoon of Butter and saute until transparent. Add in the Garlic and cook until fragrant. Whisk in the Milk and bring it to a strong simmer.
2	POTATOES: Drop in the Sliced Potatoes individually by hand and bring them to a boil, Immediately reduce the heat to low; cover and simmer until the Potatoes are barely tender, about 3 to 5 minutes more.
3	CREAM BASE: Place a colander over a large bowl, carefully spoon in so as to not break up the Potatoes, drain them while reserving the Milk. Return the cooking Milk to the saucepan, add in the Heavy Cream and stir over low heat until thoroughly combined, beginning to thicken and steaming, about 5 minutes more.
4	THICKENING: If the Cream Sauce doesn't thicken up enough, add in a little Corn Starch mixed with water. It should coat the back of a spoon rather thickly.
HELP	MY CREAM SAUCE BREAKS DOWN: The reasons behind a Cream Sauce breaking down (the Cream and Butter separates) are many (Too much heat too fast, kept the Sauce heating for too long, allowed the Sauce to cool for too long, REFRIGERATED IT, etc.). You know it's beginning to break down when you see little Fat droplets forming around the edges. STOP HEATING NOW! Stir in more Cream a tablespoon at a time until the Cream and Butter re-emulsifies.
5	LAYERING: Evenly brush all surfaces of the dish with about 1 tablespoon of very soft Butter. Arrange the sliced Potatoes in a single layer in the bottom of the baking dish (overlapping the discs by about 1/2). Sprinkle each layer with some shredded Cheese and Bacon Lardons and dot the Cheese evenly with 4~5 very small chunks of the remaining Butter. Season each layer lightly with Salt and Pepper. Work quickly here so the Potatoes don't begin to dry out.
6	FINAL STEP: For the top and final layer of Potatoes, dot with Butter Chunks, Sprinkle with Salt and coat evenly with the remaining Cheese. (or . . . Make a little extra - you CAN'T REALLY have too much shredded Cheese in here).
7	CREAM SAUCE: Gently pour the hot cooking Milk and Heavy Cream mixture evenly over the top so as to thoroughly wet all of the Potatoes.
8	BAKE: Transfer the uncovered baking dish to the oven and bake until the Cheese becomes deep golden brown and the Milk mixture has reduced and thickened, about 1 hour. Remove from the oven and let it rest for 10 to 15 minutes before serving.
SERVE	Serve while hot.

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