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by Liz Robb

Cauliflower, Leek and Mushroom Gratin



Ingredients

1 slice from a loaf of day old wholemeal bread
130g extra mature cheddar cheese
1 medium cauliflower
1 large leek
150-200g chestnut mushrooms
50g butter
50g plain flour
300ml semi skimmed milk
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Nutmeg

Servings

4

Person

Preparation

- 1 Preheat the oven to 220 degrees or 200 degrees fan oven.
- 2 Break the bread into pieces and grind it into fine breadcrumbs.
- 3 Grate the cheese. Mix a third of it with the breadcrumbs, grind together, and then put the rest of the grated cheese to one side for the sauce.
- 4 Cut the cauliflower into small florets. Slice the leek into chunks and rinse out any grit. Wipe the mushrooms and cut them into halves.
- 5 Steam the cauliflower for 5 minutes, add the leeks and steam for another 3 minutes and then add the mushrooms for a final 2-3 minutes. Drain really well and leave to steam dry.
- 6 Meanwhile, make the sauce. Melt the butter over a low heat in a saucepan then stir in the flour with a wooden spoon until you have a smooth paste. Add the milk, a little at a time, stirring constantly to make sure there are no lumps. When you have a smooth sauce of the right consistency, add the grated cheese and stir in until it melts. Season the sauce to taste with salt and black pepper and stir in a grating of nutmeg.

- 7 Arrange the cauliflower, leeks and mushrooms in an oven proof dish then pour the sauce over them, giving the dish a little shake to get the sauce into the gaps. Sprinkle on the cheese and breadcrumb mixture and bake in the preheated oven for about 20 minutes, until the dish is bubbling and the topping is golden.
- 8 Variations:
- 9 Try using other vegetables with the cauliflower, perhaps carrots, broccoli, celery or peppers. Maybe add a little garlic or chopped spring onions.
- 10 Spice up the topping by adding a bit of dry English mustard or cayenne pepper to the breadcrumb mixture.
- 11 Replace the mature cheddar with another strongly flavoured cheese, perhaps blue stilton.

Cooks Note

This dish, packed with vegetables, makes a lovely meat free main dish served with crusty bread, with hot buttered toast or piled onto a jacket potato, much more interesting than the usual cauliflower cheese. Alternatively, you can serve it as a tasty side dish to accompany sausages, chicken or a roast beef dinner.

Serves 4 as a main meal.
