

POTATO, FENNEL & LEEK GRATIN

Ingredients:

3 tbsp unsalted Butter, softened
2 ½ lbs Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and sliced ½" thick (about 7 cups)
2 ½ cups Heavy Cream
2 cloves Garlic, finely chopped
Kosher Salt and freshly ground black Pepper
1 tsp Fennel seeds, lightly crushed
3 large Leeks, white and pale green parts only, trimmed, halved and sliced crosswise ½" thick
1 ½ to 1 ¾ Fennel bulbs, trimmed, quartered, cored and thinly sliced (about 5 cups)
8 oz Gruyere, grated (about 2 cups)

Method:

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 400° F.
Grease the bottom and sides of a 10 x 15" (4 quart) baking dish with 1 tbsp of the butter.
Put the potatoes, cream, garlic, 1 ½ tsp pepper in an 8-quart pot.
Bring to a simmer over medium heat and cook, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are barely tender when pierced with a fork – about 8 minutes.
Meanwhile, melt the remaining 2 tbsp butter in a heavy-duty 12" skillet over medium heat.
Add the fennel seeds and stir until just fragrant – about 30 seconds.
Add the leeks and fennel, season lightly with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender – 8-10 minutes.
Gently mix the leeks and fennel with the potatoes.
Transfer to the prepared baking dish, evening out the vegetables.
Top with the cheese, and bake until the cheese is a deep golden brown, the cream has thickened, and the potatoes are tender when pierced with a knife – 35-40 minutes.
(If the top is becoming too brown before the vegetables are done, cover the gratin loosely with foil.)
Let cool for 10-20 minutes before serving.
Plate with the meat and serve.

(Serves 10-12)