



CREAMY POTATO BAKE

SERVES 4

5 medium potatoes
2 cups milk (or 1 cup milk and
1 cup cream)
½ t salt
1 bay leaf
1 celery stick
4 sprigs fresh thyme
6 whole black peppercorns
¼ t grated fresh nutmeg
6 T butter
3 T cake flour
1½ cups grated Cheddar cheese
salt and ground black pepper
to taste
1 large onion, peeled and
thinly sliced
a small handful of grated
mozzarella cheese
a small handful of grated
Parmesan cheese
6 rashers rindless bacon, fried
until crispy, then chopped into
bits (optional)

- 1 Boil the whole potatoes in salted water for 15–20 minutes until cooked. Allow to cool, then peel and slice thinly.
- 2 Preheat your oven to 200 °C.
- 3 In a small saucepan, mix the milk, salt, bay leaf, celery, thyme, peppercorns and nutmeg. Slowly bring to the boil, then immediately remove from the heat and allow to cool. Strain the flavoured milk.
- 4 To make the cheese sauce, set a pan over medium heat. Add half the butter (3 T), allow to melt, then add the flour to the pan all at once. Stir well to smooth out any lumps.
- 5 Keep stirring until the flour is just turning golden and dry, with a biscuit smell. Then add the flavoured milk to the pan in a constant stream, whisking all the time. Keep whisking until the sauce starts to thicken and is smooth with no lumps. Add about two-thirds of the Cheddar cheese and stir until melted in.
- 6 Remove from the heat. Season to taste.
- 7 In a clean pan, over medium heat, fry the onion in 2 T of the remaining butter until soft, golden and caramelised.
- 8 Use the remaining 1 T butter to grease a baking dish.
- 9 Layer half the potato slices on the base of the dish. Season lightly.
- 10 Cover with the onion, spoon over a third of the cheese sauce, and then sprinkle with the mozzarella cheese.
- 11 Cover with the remaining potato slices in overlapping circles. Top with the remaining cheese sauce, and sprinkle over the rest of the Cheddar and the Parmesan cheese.
- 12 Bake for about 1 hour, until the top is lightly browned and the sauce is bubbling.
- 13 If you like, garnish with hot, crispy bacon bits and a pinch of ground nutmeg.

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