

Potato Gratin

Serves 6

3 pounds Yukon gold potatoes - of uniform size
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1 medium garlic clove, crushed through a press
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
5 oz brie or goat cheese
2 cups heavy cream
3 T chopped chives
1/4 cup Parmesan cheese

Wash the potatoes and slice them into rounds 1/8 inch thick, using a mandolin, the slicing disk of a food processor, or a sharp knife. Generously butter a 9 by 12-inch heavy shallow baking dish, preferably earthenware or cast-enamel, or an oval gratin dish of comparable size. Rub the dish with half of the crushed garlic.

In a small saucepan, bring the cream to a simmer with the remaining garlic and season generously with salt and pepper. Set aside. Place cheese in blender and add half of the hot cream and blend. Stir into the remaining cream, and add chives.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Arrange the potatoes in one overlapping layer on the bottom of the dish. Season the layer generously with salt, pepper, and add 1/4 of cream mix. Arrange two more layers on top, seasoning and adding cream to each layer liberally. Press the layers down to compact them. Pour in enough remaining cream to come up just a little below the top layer of potatoes. Set the baking dish on a larger baking sheet, cover with foil, and bake until the potatoes feel tender when pierced with a knife, about 1 hour.

Raise the oven temperature to 425°F, remove the foil, and bake until the top begins to brown, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle evenly with the Parmesan. Bake until the top is brown and bubbly, 15 to 20 minutes more. Remove from the oven and let the potatoes stand for 10 minutes to absorb the cream.
Serve