

LEEK BREAD & BUTTER PUDDING

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

150g salted butter, softened
4 leeks (roughly 750g), trimmed and sliced into rounds
3 large eggs
300ml whole milk
50ml double cream
2 tbsp thyme leaves
2 fat garlic cloves, crushed
40g parmesan or vegetarian alternative, finely grated
500g white sourdough bread, cut into small slices (crusts removed on half the slices – see 'know how')
60g mature cheddar, coarsely grated
Winter salad leaves (such as mizuna, mustard greens, lamb's lettuce) to serve

DIRECTIONS

Melt 50g of the butter in a large frying pan set over a medium heat. Once fizzing, add the leeks with a pinch of salt. Fry for 25 minutes until soft and translucent. Stir regularly to make sure they don't catch – the goal is leeks that are silky and sweet, not browned. Once cooked, transfer to a bowl and set aside to cool.

Heat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6. Whisk together the eggs, milk and double cream in a jug. Season generously with salt and pepper.

Mix the remaining 100g butter with half the thyme, the garlic and parmesan or vegetarian alternative, then spread on both sides of the bread slices.

Scatter a quarter of the leeks over the base of a deep ovenproof pudding dish and arrange a layer of bread on top. No need to be neat. Pour over a slug of the egg milk. Repeat until all the leeks and bread are used up, then pour over the remaining milk mixture and press down on the layers so they soak up the juices. Sprinkle the cheddar and remaining thyme on top and bake for 45 minutes or until golden and bubbling.

Bring it to the table with the speed you might take a soufflé and serve with a few crisp leaves of winter salad alongside.