

SPINACH & RICOTTA CRUMBLE

Serves 6 as a main, or 10 as part of a spread

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE FILLING:

1½ tbsp olive oil
2 onions, diced
2 medium leeks, trimmed and finely sliced
2 sprigs thyme, tied with string
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1kg frozen spinach, defrosted and chopped
½ x 200g pack parmesan (or veggie alternative), finely grated
¼ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
Zest of 1 small lemon
2 x 250g tubs ricotta

FOR THE TOPPING:

125g cold unsalted butter, cubed
200g plain flour
100g blanched hazelnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped
½ x 200g pack parmesan (or veggie alternative), finely grated
1 tbsp lemon thyme or thyme leaves, roughly chopped (plus extra to garnish)
1 tsp sea salt flakes
¾ tsp freshly ground black pepper
1 medium egg, lightly beaten

METHOD

GET AHEAD:

Make the filling a day ahead in the gratin dish, cover and chill until ready to assemble and cook. The crumble topping can also be made ahead (minus the egg) and chilled — mix in the egg just before scattering over the spinach.

DIRECTIONS

First make the topping: in a mixing bowl, rub the butter into the flour until it resembles very coarse breadcrumbs — you want some pea-sized pieces of butter left in the mixture. Stir in the rest of the topping ingredients, apart from the egg. Cover and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.

To make the filling, warm the olive oil in a very large saucepan over a medium-low heat. Add the onions, leeks, thyme and a generous pinch of salt and sauté until soft and translucent, about 15-20 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for a further couple of minutes.

Meanwhile, tip the spinach into a separate pan with 2 tbsp water and bring to the boil, stirring frequently. Tip into a colander and press down well to extract the excess liquid, then add to the onion mixture and mix well, cooking for a couple of minutes. Tip into a large bowl, remove the thyme and mix in the parmesan, nutmeg and lemon zest, then season. Crumble in the ricotta, leaving some large curds intact, and gently mix through. Tip into a large baking dish (about 20cm x 30cm).

Preheat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Mix the egg into the crumble mixture with a knife, then scatter it over the spinach and bake for about 35-40 minutes until piping hot and golden brown. Scatter over a few extra thyme leaves, if you like.