



Chicory Gratin

In northern Europe, notably Switzerland, the greens of chard, chicory and curly endive are often discarded, as it's the crisp stems that are prized. There's no need to waste either part of these tasty, healthy vegetables. Use the greens in a pie, salad or pasta and turn the stems into a delicious side dish like this chicory gratin baked in a creamy, cheese-topped béchamel sauce. If you don't have leek, use a large, chopped onion and add a few chopped green onions if you have them.

Serves 2 as a side dish

INGREDIENTS

- 40g butter
- 1 leek, finely sliced and washed well
- Salt flakes and freshly grated nutmeg, to taste
- 1 head chicory, stems washed, trimmed and sliced (about 175g cleaned weight)
- 20g plain flour (6 teaspoons)
- 1 cup milk (250ml)
- 60g freshly grated Gruyere or Comté



METHOD

1. Melt butter in a heavy-based saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add leek and a good pinch of salt. Stir well, cover and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until tender.
3. Stir in the chicory stems, cover and cook for a further 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 180°C.
5. Stir in flour and cook for 5 minutes, stirring regularly to remove any bits stuck to the base of the pan.
6. Add milk, increase heat to medium-high and stir constantly until it boils.
7. Reduce heat so that it's just simmering and stir for a further 2 minutes.
8. Remove from heat, taste and stir in salt and nutmeg.
9. Transfer to a baking dish and top with cheese.
10. Bake for about 20 minutes, until bubbling and well-coloured.
11. Serve chicory gratin in the baking dish alongside any meat or poultry.