

POTATO AND LEEK BRAISE

(adapted from Molly Stevens)

2 medium leeks (about 1 pound, white and light green parts only)
1 pound yellow potatoes (Yukon Gold)
butter for greasing the dish
1 tsp fresh thyme leaves
pinch of nutmeg
salt and pepper
1 + 1/4 cup chicken stock, heated to almost boiling
1/4 cup half and half (or heavy whipping cream)



Heat oven to 325F.

Chop the leeks in 3/4 inch pieces, add them to a bowl of very cold water and wash them well to remove any clinging sand and grit. Drain. Repeat. Drain them well and add to a well buttered 8 x 12 gratin type dish, preferably shallow.

Peel the potatoes and cut them into 3/4 inch chunks. Add them to the dish with the leeks, season with thyme, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Toss with a spatula, spreading the potatoes in a single layer. Pour the hot stock over, cover tightly with aluminum foil and place in the oven.

Braise for 45 minutes. Remove the foil, stir the potatoes and leeks, check for the amount of liquid remaining. If it is almost dry, cover again with foil; if the liquid is still about halfway up the sides of the dish, leave uncovered. Continue to braise for 20-25 more minutes.

Remove the dish from the oven, increase the temperature to 425F, stir the leeks and potatoes and pour the half and half (or heavy cream). Return the dish to the oven, uncovered, bake until bubbly and browned on top, about 25 minutes.

Let it rest for 10 minutes before serving.