

# Spinach Gratin

## Recipe by Liz the Chef

This gratin is almost always on the buffet for Thanksgiving or Christmas at our house. A nice substitute for potatoes, it goes well with the turkey or beef tenderloin I usually serve for the holiday meal main course.

Adjust the salt and pepper to your liking, but the nutmeg is the classic spice to add. Made with less cheese than is traditional, and also without cream, this lighter version demands a great tasting frozen spinach as you can find. It took one truckload of the fresh stuff to convince me that frozen, organic spinach is the only way to go here.

## Serves 8-10

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 medium-sized yellow onions, chopped
- 1/4 cup unbleached flour
- 3 cups organic whole milk
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- pinches of cayenne
- 1 and 1/2 cup grated Gruyère cheese
- 3 16 oz. bags of frozen, organic, chopped spinach - thawed
- 1/2 to 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper

## Panko topping:

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 and 1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
- sea salt, to taste

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Squeeze the liquid from the thawed spinach, handful by handful. Set aside.
3. Heat milk to simmer in saucepan.
4. Melt the butter in a heavy-bottomed pot. Add onions and cook until wilted but not browned, about 10 minutes. Add flour and hot milk and whisk sauce until it thickens. Add nutmeg and cayenne. Turn off the heat.
5. Stir in the cheese and season with salt and pepper. Taste and correct seasoning. Add the spinach and mix in well.

6. Pour into a 9 x 11" glass or ceramic baking dish. Prepare crumb topping.
7. Melt butter in medium skillet. Add panko, sprinkle with sea salt and stir until lightly toasted. This occurs quite suddenly.
8. Gently smooth the toasted panko on top of the gratin. Cook for 30-35 minutes until bubbling.

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