

Spinach with Bechamel Sauce

Creamy spinach gratin with rich béchamel sauce and golden cheese topping. Perfect as a side dish or vegetarian main course. Easy recipe with tips!

20 min

PREP

20 min

COOK

40 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 1 lb spinach
- 2 oz parmesan cheese

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the spinach**

Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Clean 1 pound fresh spinach thoroughly, removing thick stems and any damaged leaves.
- 2** Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add spinach and blanch for 1-2 minutes until wilted and bright green.
- 3** Drain spinach immediately and plunge into ice water to stop cooking. Once cooled, squeeze spinach firmly in a clean kitchen towel to remove as much water as possible.
- 4 Make the béchamel sauce**

Melt 3 tablespoons butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add 3 tablespoons flour and whisk constantly for 2 minutes to form a smooth paste (called a roux).
- 5** Gradually pour in 1½ cups cold milk while whisking continuously to prevent lumps. Cook, stirring constantly, for 5-7 minutes until sauce thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon.
- 6** Season béchamel with salt, white pepper, and a pinch of nutmeg to taste. Remove from heat.
- 7 Assemble the dish**

Combine squeezed spinach with the warm béchamel sauce in a large bowl. Stir in ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese until well mixed.

- 8 Butter a 9x9 inch baking dish. Transfer spinach mixture to dish and spread evenly with a spatula.
- 9 Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup breadcrumbs with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup additional Parmesan cheese. Sprinkle this mixture evenly over the spinach.
- 10 **Bake and serve**

Bake for 20-25 minutes until top is golden brown and sauce bubbles around the edges.
- 11 Let cool for 5 minutes before serving to allow the sauce to set slightly.

Tips

Always squeeze excess water from the spinach thoroughly using a clean kitchen towel—this prevents a watery gratin and ensures the béchamel maintains its creamy consistency.

Make your béchamel sauce with cold milk added gradually while whisking constantly to prevent lumps. If lumps do form, strain the sauce through a fine-mesh sieve.

Use fresh spinach when possible and blanch it quickly in salted boiling water for just 1-2 minutes to preserve its vibrant color and prevent overcooking.

Season each component separately—the spinach, the béchamel sauce, and even the cheese topping—for the most flavorful result.

Choose a shallow baking dish rather than a deep one to ensure even cooking and maximum crispy surface area on top.

Let the gratin rest for 5-10 minutes after baking to allow the sauce to set slightly, making it easier to serve and preventing burns from the hot sauce.

For extra richness, brush the top with melted butter before adding breadcrumbs and cheese—this creates an exceptionally golden, crispy crust.

Toast your breadcrumbs lightly in a dry pan before using them as a topping for added texture and nutty flavor.