

Green Garlic Soufflé

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Late spring is the moment for “green” garlic, the immature stalks, which have a subtle garlicky aroma that only hints at the pungency of the mature bulb to come. The whole stalk can be thinly sliced, just as you would slice a leek. Making this soufflé in a shallow baking dish instead of the classic deep soufflé dish produces more crust in proportion to fluffy interior. From *Eating Local: The Cookbook Inspired by America’s Farmers* by Janet Fletcher (Andrews McMeel).

In its youth, well before maturity, garlic looks like a slender leek or thick scallion. The base doesn’t swell into the bulb we think of as garlic until early summer. So late spring is the moment for “green” garlic, the immature stalks, which have a subtle garlicky aroma that only hints at the pungency of the mature bulb to come. The whole stalk can be sliced thin, just as you would slice a leek. Making this soufflé in a shallow baking dish instead of in the classic deep soufflé dish produces more crust in proportion to fluffy interior.

Ingredients

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for the baking dish
- 1/4 cup plus 5 tablespoons freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese
- Approximately 2 pounds green garlic, enough to yield 4 cups sliced
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole milk
- 4 fresh thyme sprigs
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 4 large egg yolks
- Kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 5 large egg whites



Photo: Sara Remington Photography

Directions

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Generously butter the bottom and sides of a 13- by 9-inch oval gratin dish. Sprinkle the buttered dish evenly with 3 tablespoons of the cheese.

To trim the green garlic, cut off and discard the tough, dark-green leafy tops, which resemble the tops of leeks. You will use only the white and pale green part of the stalks. Cut the trimmed stalk in half lengthwise, then slice thinly crosswise. Put the sliced garlic in a large pot of cold water and swish well to dislodge any dirt. Lift the sliced garlic into a sieve with your hands or with a wire-mesh skimmer. Let drain.

Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter in a large skillet over moderately low heat. Add the sliced green garlic and season with salt and pepper. Stir to coat with the butter, then

cover with a round of parchment paper and the lid, reduce the heat to low, and cook until the green garlic is meltingly tender, about 20 minutes, uncovering to stir occasionally.

While the green garlic cooks, melt the remaining 4 tablespoons butter in a small saucepan over moderately low heat. Add the flour and whisk to blend. Cook for about 1 minute, whisking, then add the milk gradually, whisking constantly. Add the thyme sprigs. Adjust the heat to maintain a gentle bubble and cook, whisking often, for about 5 minutes to allow the bechamel to thicken and to infuse it with the herb flavor. Stir in the nutmeg. Remove from the heat and let cool for 10 minutes, then whisk in the egg yolks one at a time. Whisk in the 1/4 cup cheese, then season with salt and pepper. Remove the thyme sprigs.

Stir the cooked green garlic into the bechamel base.

In an electric mixer or by hand, beat the egg whites to firm but not stiff peaks. Fold the whites into the base one third at a time. Transfer the souffle mixture to the prepared baking dish, spreading it evenly. Top with the remaining 2 tablespoons cheese.

Bake until the souffle is well puffed, firm to the touch, and golden brown, 17 to 18 minutes. Serve immediately.

Serves 6