

Leek and Potato Pie

This New Zealand recipe has ancestral resonance for the many New Zealanders who have roots in Wales, where the leek is the national vegetable.

1. Blanch leeks in boiling salted water for 10 minutes. Refresh under cold running water and drain.
2. In a saucepan, boil potatoes in salted water until just cooked, about 10 to 15 minutes. Drain, return potatoes to pan, and place over low heat for 5 minutes to dry. Mash potatoes until smooth, adding 1 tablespoon of the butter and the egg yolk. Set aside.
3. Place milk and studded onion in a medium saucepan and heat milk to just below boiling.
4. Preheat oven to 375°F. In a separate saucepan, melt the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter. Add flour and gently cook over moderate heat until mixture reaches a soft, sandy texture. Add warmed milk gradually, stirring constantly between each addition to prevent lumps. Lower heat and simmer 3 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, lemon juice, and nutmeg.
5. In an 8-inch round ovenproof casserole, toss leeks in sauce and mix in $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of the blue cheese. Spread mashed potatoes on top, sprinkle with remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ cup blue cheese, and bake for 30 minutes. Place casserole under broiler to brown just before serving.

servings: 8 to 10

- 1¼ pounds leeks, well-rinsed, trimmed, and cut into 1-inch-thick rounds
- 1 pound potatoes, peeled
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 egg yolk
- 1¾ cups milk
- 1 onion studded with 6 cloves and ½ bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 drops fresh lemon juice
- Pinch of ground nutmeg
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup blue-veined cheese, such as Stilton, crumbled, plus ⅓ cup for topping