

A Sutherland Belle

White Christmas Cauliflower Au Gratin

INGREDIENTS

- 8 cups cauliflower florets about 3 pounds
- 1/2-pound bacon or pancetta, cooked and crumbled
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1/3 cup flour
- 3 cups half & half
- 1 teaspoon dry ground mustard (optional but encouraged)
- 1 cup Gruyere cheese, grated and divided
- 1/2 cup Swiss cheese, grated
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

For Topping

- 1/2 cup panko crumbs (use [pork rind panko crumbs](#) for a gluten-free option)
- 1/2 cup Gruyere cheese, grated
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- fresh thyme for garnishing

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Separate cauliflower into florets and either steam for 5 minutes or bake in the oven for 10 minutes, until just barely tender or slightly browned. Drain and set aside.
3. In a saucepan, melt 4 tablespoons of butter. Add 1/3 cup of flour and whisk until smooth and the mixture is bubbling.
4. Add half & half and continue to stir until thick. Add 1/2 cup each of Gruyere and Swiss cheeses, salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Stir until melted. The sauce should cover the back of a spoon. Stir in crumbled bacon, reserving some to sprinkle on top after baking.
5. Pour 1/3 of the sauce into an au gratin baking dish or baking dish about that same size. 10 x 10 approximately. A 9 x 13 can be used as well but the casserole will be a bit thinner.
6. Place par-cooked cauliflower on top. Sprinkle with salt.
7. Pour the remaining sauce on top of the cauliflower.
8. For the topping, combine melted butter, gruyere, and bread crumbs in a small bowl. Sprinkle on top of the cauliflower.
9. Bake for 30 minutes or until the top is crispy and the cauliflower is tender. Top with fresh thyme and crumbled bacon.

Recipe Notes

- Substitute all Gruyere or Swiss for the recipe or even use Extra Sharp White Cheddar.
- Do not use fat-free milk. Whole milk is best if not using cream.