

Leeks

Like other members of the onion family, leeks have a positive effect on health and well-being. Leeks are believed to fight cancer, especially colon and prostate cancer.



Growing info: Leeks are a versatile crop. They can be grown in the summer, fall, and they'll overwinter to be available in the spring.

Common Problems: See onions.

TIPS:

Short-term Storage: Store in plastic in the refrigerator.

Long-term Storage: Freeze in a cooked form.

General Cooking Info: Leeks tend to have a sweeter flavor than onions do when cooked. The silky texture of leeks simmered in butter is a very nice aspect of cooking with them. If you're at a loss, just use them exactly as you would onions. The greens are edible and can be good additions to soups. Leeks tend to catch dirt between their leaf layers, so give them a good rinsing after chopping them!

Baked Leeks with Lemon and Garlic

- 3 md. leeks (1 to 1 1/2-inch in diameter)
- 3/4 cup bread crumbs
- 6 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 lg. lemon; zested and juiced
- 2 lg. garlic cloves; sliced thin
- 1/2 tsp. salt

1. Trim and clean the leeks as shown in this video showing but don't cut them into rings - you want to preserve the stalk.
2. Heat oven to 450 degrees and bring a large pot of water to a boil. Tie the loose ends of each leek with a bit of kitchen twine or wrap with a rubber band.
3. Cook the leeks for 7 - 8 minutes until tender. Drain and immerse in ice water to stop cooking.
4. Melt the butter over very low heat in a small pot. Add the garlic, salt and lemon zest and continue cooking until the mixture is fragrant - about 3 minutes.
5. Thoroughly mix 1/2 of the butter mixture with the bread crumbs.
6. Remove ties from leeks, cut the rest of through the root, then arrange cut side up in a baking dish. Drizzle with unused butter, lemon juice and sprinkle with bread crumbs.
7. Bake in upper until crumbs brown - 10 - 15 minutes. Serve immediately.

from About.com

Spinach and Leek White Bean Soup

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 4 leeks, bulb only, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped

- 2 (16 ounce) cans fat-free chicken broth
- 2 (16 ounce) cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1/2 cup whole wheat couscous
- 2 cups packed fresh spinach
- salt and pepper to taste

1. Heat olive oil in a large saucepan or soup pot over medium heat. Add the leeks and garlic; saute until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the chicken broth, cannellini beans, bay leaves and cumin. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low, and stir in the couscous. Cover, and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in spinach and season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

from Allrecipes.com

Artichoke, Leek, and Potato Gratin

- 6 medium to large leeks (about 1 1/2 pounds; white and pale-green parts only), trimmed, halved lengthwise, washed, and cut crosswise into 2-inch pieces
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 6 large russet (baking) potatoes (about 3 pounds), peeled
- 6 ounces imported Swiss cheese, such as Gruyère or Emmental, shredded (1 1/2 cups packed)
- 1 (11-ounce) jar water-packed artichoke hearts, drained and sliced
- 1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated

- Preheat oven to 425°F. Butter 9- by 13-inch glass baking dish or 14-inch oval gratin dish.

In medium saucepan over moderately high heat, combine leeks, 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, and 2/3 cup water. Cover, bring to boil, then reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 8 minutes. Drain, transfer leeks to medium bowl, and let cool.

Using food processor slicing disk or mandoline, thinly slice potatoes, then transfer to large bowl and add cold water to cover. Stir with hands to rinse, drain well, and repeat. Layer potatoes between paper towels and pat dry.

Add Swiss cheese, artichokes, pepper, and remaining 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt to leeks and toss well.

Layer 1/3 of potatoes in bottom of prepared dish, overlapping slightly. Evenly spoon 1/2 of leek-cheese mixture over top. Top with second layer of potatoes, then remaining leek-cheese mixture, then final layer of potatoes. Slowly pour half-and-half over top. Cover snugly with foil.

Bake 40 minutes. Remove foil, sprinkle Parmesan cheese over top, and bake until top is golden and potatoes are easily pierced with small knife, about 20 minutes more. Serve warm.

from epicurious.com