

Sweet Potato and Bacon Gratin

serves 6 (multiply if you have a bigger crowd to feed)

adapted from [apartmentcooker at bluestemkitchen](#) via the [Food52 cookbook](#)

6 slices bacon, diced
1 medium onion, minced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup unsalted butter
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 cups whole milk
1/2 cup creme fraiche
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
3/4 teaspoon salt
freshly cracked pepper to taste
1/4 cup parmesan cheese (optional)
2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced into 1/8 inch rounds

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 9 x 9 inch (or 2.5 quart) baking dish.

Brown the bacon over medium heat, turning occasionally to get an even crisp. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon and place on a paper towel-lined plate to absorb the extra grease. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon of bacon fat. Add the onions to the pan and cook until they are translucent, but not brown. Add the garlic, stir, and remove from heat. Toss the bacon and onion mixture together and set aside.

make the bechamel: In a medium-sized saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. When the foaming subsides, whisk in the flour. Cook for a few minutes while stirring to make sure the flour does not taste raw. While whisking, add the milk slowly. Add the creme fraiche. Continue whisking to break up any lumps. Bring to a simmer, then reduce heat and cook until bechamel is thick, 5 minutes or so. Add the mustard, nutmeg, salt, and pepper. Whisk to combine, then remove from heat.

Spread out a layer of sweet potato rounds on the prepared baking sheet. Layer with spoonfuls of bacon mixture and then bechamel. Repeat until the sweet potatoes and bacon mixture are all used up. Top with a final spread of bechamel and a sprinkle of parmesan cheese. At this point you can cover the dish with plastic wrap and place in the fridge until ready to bake. Let come to room temperature before baking.

Bake gratin for 30-35 minutes until the bechamel is bubbly and the potatoes are cooked through. Put under the broiler for the last couple of minutes to give it a nicely browned top. Let cool slightly and serve.