

GUASTELLO'S VILLAGE MARKET

Corn Spoonbread with Cheddar and Bacon

Serves 6

Ingredients:

3 thick slices bacon, preferably applewood-smoked, coarsely chopped
3 cups whole milk
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup yellow cornmeal, preferably stone-ground
4 tbl. butter cut into small pieces
3 large eggs, separated
1 cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
1 cup fresh or frozen corn kernels
2 green onions, white and pale green parts, finely chopped
Chopped fresh chives for garnish (optional)

Preheat the oven to 375°. In a large frying pan, fry the bacon over medium heat, stirring frequently, until crisp and golden, about 6 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to paper towels to drain. Discard the fat in the pan.

In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, bring 2 cups of the milk, 1 ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper to a boil, being careful that the milk doesn't boil over. Gradually whisk in the cornmeal and return to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook, whisking frequently, until the cornmeal is quite thick, about 2 minutes.

Remove from the heat. Add the butter and whisk until melted. In a bowl, whisk together the remaining 1 cup milk and the egg yolks and whisk into the cornmeal mixture. Stir in the cheese, corn and green onions. Set aside.

In a clean bowl, beat the egg whites with a handheld mixer on high speed until soft peaks form. Stir about one-fourth of the whites into the cornmeal mixture to lighten it, and then fold in the remaining whites. Butter a 2-quart baking dish or six 1 ½ cup individual baking dishes. Spread the cornmeal mixture evenly in the prepared dish(es).

Bake until puffed and golden brown, about 25 minutes for the large spoonbread and 15-20 minutes for the individual spoonbreads. Garnish with the chives, if using, and serve at once.

Cook's Note: You can spice this up by substituting pepper jack for the Cheddar. Or, add 1 or 2 roasted, peeled, and chopped poblano chiles to the mixture before folding in the egg whites.

Credit: Williams-Sonoma