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Belgian Endives au Gratin

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Introduction:

This classic Belgian recipe uses braised Belgian endives wrapped in ham and baked in a cheesy bechamel sauce to crusty perfection. Serve with real Belgian-style fries and beer.

Preparation:

1. In a saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add endives, 1/4 cup of water, sugar and finely chopped garlic and braise for 15-20 minutes covered or until the endives are tender. After cooking, drain endives keeping saucepan's liquid for the sauce.2. Preheat oven to 400?F.3. To make bechamel, melt butter in saucepan. Add flour and cook for about a minute, stirring well with a wire whisk to eliminate lumps. Slowly add milk, continuing to stir. Next, stir in reserved liquid from cooking endives until the sauce is smooth and thickened. Continue to simmer and stir for several minutes until all traces of flour have been dissolved.4. Remove saucepan from heat and fold in 1/4 cup of cheese. Add pepper, salt and nutmeg to taste.5. Butter a baking dish large enough to hold single layer of endives. Wrap each endive in slice of ham and place in dish.6. Cover endives with sauce and top with remaining grated cheese. Place dish in oven and bake for about 15-20 minutes.7. Next, move dish underneath preheated broiler to brown the cheese watching carefully to prevent burning. Serve immediately. Serves about 6.

Image (optional):

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Ingredients:

- 6 to 8 Belgian endives, cored with stems removed
- Salt and pepper
- 1-2 cloves of garlic
- 1-2 teaspoons of sugar
- 2-3 tablespoons of butter
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 3 cups milk
- 1 1/2 cups grated Gruyere cheese
- Pinch of grated nutmeg

- 8 thin slices of ham

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