

CAULIFLOWER GRATIN

SERVES 4

This is a somewhat funkier alternative to potato gratin, with a cool presentation to boot: it's served right in the pan. But this isn't just a textural change. Cauliflower is a more nuanced choice than potato, with a slightly musky flavor. Roasting the cauliflower is a necessary step that removes its moisture, thereby preventing the gratin from becoming watery. Serve this with roast chicken or beef. You can also toss cooked pasta in the sauce before baking it.

1 head cauliflower, separated into small to medium florets
2 tablespoons canola oil
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons butter

1 clove garlic, minced
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons dried bread crumbs (preferably Japanese panko)
¼ cup plus 3 tablespoons grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
2 cups cream

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Put the cauliflower in a bowl and drizzle with the oil. Season with salt and pepper, spread out on a cookie sheet, and roast until tender to a knife-tip, approximately 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside.

Meanwhile, melt the butter in a heavy-bottomed sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Add the bread crumbs and cook, tossing frequently, until lightly golden. Remove the pan from the heat, toss in 3 tablespoons of the cheese, and season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Turn the oven up to 400°F.

Pour the cream into an 8-inch, heavy-bottomed, ovenproof sauté pan and bring to a boil over high heat. Continue to boil until reduced to ½ cup, approximately 8 minutes. Fold in the remaining ¼ cup cheese and the cauliflower. Top evenly with the bread crumbs. Transfer to the oven and bake until the crumbs turn golden brown, approximately 5 minutes.

Remove the pan from the oven and serve the gratin right from the pan at the table.