

RED LEICESTER CAULIFLOWER CHEESE

by Nigella

INTRODUCTION

I don't think that Cauliflower Cheese exists as a comfort food staple outside of the UK, but it surely should, and why I gladly post this recipe here. I must tell you that this brilliant way of preparing the cauliflower so that it both retains bite and stops the sauce becoming watery or grainy is pinched from Nick Jones (of Soho House fame), as is his smell-reducing use of bay leaves.

I most commonly make this with Red Leicester cheese, but Cheddar is more orthodox; feel free to use any combination of hard cheeses you favour.

Also, if you want a truly scorched top - as I have a weakness for - do blitz the dish under the grill (broiler in the US) for a few minutes at the end.

INGREDIENTS

Serves: 4-6

- 1 large cauliflower
- 2 bay leaves
- salt
- 100 grams butter
- 2 teaspoons english mustard
- 50 grams plain flour
- 500 millilitres milk
- 300 grams grated red leicester cheese

METHOD

1. Preheat your oven to 220°C/gas mark 7/425°F.
2. Cut the cauliflower into small florets, put into a saucepan with the bay leaves and cover with cold water. Add a sprinkling of salt and bring to the boil, then drain and refresh with cold water. Let the cauliflower drain again in a colander, pluck out the bay leaves and discard.
3. When the cauliflower is completely drained, put into an ovenproof dish in an even layer.
4. To make the cheese sauce, melt the butter in a heavy-bottom saucepan, then whisk in the mustard and flour, and cook over a gentle heat for about 5 minutes. Whisk in the milk off the heat, and then put it back on the heat and keep stirring until it becomes really thick and begins to bubble.
5. Sprinkle in all but a handful of the grated cheese, and stir over the heat until it has melted into the sauce. Check the seasoning, then pour it over the cauliflower in the dish, and then scatter the remaining handful of grated cheese over the top.
6. Cook for 20 minutes or until the cauliflower is hot, the sauce is bubbling and the cheesy top is slightly browned.