

Potatoes au Gratin, by L. Ames, 12/13/11, w/ revisions 12/23/12, 12/27/17

note: quantities are somewhat approximate -- adjust to your taste.  
several steps can be done concurrently (e.g., sautéing onions while preheating the potatoes):  
total time is about 30 minutes (including cleanup).

potatoes (red or gold) – enough to nearly fill an 8×8" Pyrex dish

1/2 - 1 large yellow onion	2/3 C water
1-2 stalk celery	1-2 chicken or beef bouillon cubes
1/4 lb (~1" slice) aged Cheddar cheese	1 tsp fresh ground black pepper
1/2 stick (1/8 lb) butter	1 tsp dried basil
1-2 tsp minced garlic	1 tsp seasoning salt
1/4 C flour	1 tsp hot (Hungarian) paprika
1/2 C milk	sprigs of fresh parsley

Microwave water until hot, add bouillon cubes to make broth; set aside.

De-eye potatoes (leave peels on); cut into 1/2" cubes or slice (food processor w/ 4-6 mm blade);  
fill the Pyrex dish; cover w/ plastic food-wrap; and preheat in the microwave for 8 minutes.

Grate the cheese; set aside.

Melt butter in large (12") pan (high heat)  
Chop onions and lightly sauté in the butter  
Add garlic and continue to sauté

When onions are sautéed, add flour; stir and cook until flour is lightly browned.  
Slowly add milk and stir continuously: mixture can quickly become a paste.  
Add broth and continue stirring: will have a thick sauce. (add more water as necessary).  
Add chopped celery, black pepper, basil, and seasoned salt  
Remove from heat; add half of the grated cheese into the sauce; stir.

Remove potatoes from microwave and add to onion/sauce mix in the pan.  
Separate potato slices as needed w/ fork and stir so as to coat the slices with sauce.

Pour potato/sauce mixture back into Pyrex pan  
Top w/ remainder of grated cheese  
Sprinkle with paprika  
Cover w/ plastic food-wrap and microwave for another 8 minutes or until potatoes are tender.  
(note: one can clean up or prepare for party during this interval.)

When done, the plastic wrap will "shrink-wrap" to the potatoes and "vacuum-seal" them.  
Note: the butter will take on a bright-orange color from the paprika.

If wrapped with towels, potatoes can remain warm for several hours:  
Dish can be prepared in advance.  
To serve: remove wrap and garnish w/ parsley.