

Brown-Butter Creamed Winter Greens

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GOURMET JANUARY 2008

Yield Makes 6 (side dish) servings

Ingredients

3/4 stick unsalted butter, divided

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

2 cups whole milk

2 tablespoons minced shallot

1/2 bay leaf

6 black peppercorns

3 1/2 pounds mixed winter greens such as collards, mustard greens, and kale

6 ounces slab bacon, any rind discarded and bacon cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices, then cut cross-wise into 1/4-inch sticks (lardons)

1 cup finely chopped onion

1/2 cup heavy cream

2 garlic cloves, minced

1 teaspoon dried hot red-pepper flakes

1 tablespoon cider vinegar, or to taste

Preparation

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a heavy medium saucepan over medium heat, then add flour and cook, stirring, 1 minute.

Add milk in a stream, whisking, then add shallot, bay leaf, and peppercorns and bring to a boil, whisking. Simmer, whisking occasionally, 5 minutes. Strain béchamel sauce through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl, discarding solids, and cover surface with parchment paper.

Discard stems and center ribs from greens, then coarsely chop leaves.

Cook lardons in a wide 6- to 8-quart heavy pot over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until golden-brown but not crisp, about 8 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain, then pour off fat from pot and wipe clean.

Heat remaining 1/2 stick butter in pot over medium-low heat until browned and fragrant, about 2 minutes, then cook onion, stirring, until softened, about 3 minutes.

Increase heat to medium-high, then stir in greens, 1 handful at a time, letting each handful wilt before adding next. Add béchamel, cream, garlic, red-pepper flakes, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper and boil, uncovered, stirring, until sauce coats greens and greens are tender, about 10 minutes.

Stir in lardons, vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste.

Cooks' notes:

·Béchamel sauce can be made 1 day ahead and chilled, its surface covered with parchment. Stir before using.
·Greens can be chopped 1 day ahead and chilled in a large sealed bag.