

LULU PORK CHOP

CREAMED KALE

© Kim O'Donnel

Makes 4 to 5 servings

Ingredients

- 2 bunches Lacinato kale, ribs removed
- 1 1/2 teaspoon salts
- 2 cups total of whole milk and half and half
- 1 shallot, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- Grated nutmeg
- Unsalted butter for greasing, plus 2 tablespoons
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan, plus more for finishing
- About 1/4 teaspoon chile flakes or Aleppo pepper (or less, if you like)
- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs

KOD's Kitchen Notes

Heavy cream is not necessary; I used a combination of whole milk and half and half. Use what you have on hand.

I like to heat the dairy before adding it to the roux; it reacts more readily and quickens the sauce. If you don't feel like dirtying another pot, heat in the microwave for 1 minute.

Bring 4 cups water to a boil in a medium pot. Add 1 teaspoon of the salt and the kale. Par-cook (in batches, as needed) for 4 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and cool under cold running water.

When kale is cool to the touch, gather into a ball and squeeze like crazy to remove as much water as possible. It will shrink considerably in volume.

Chop your ball of kale into smaller pieces.

Grease the bottom of a baking dish with butter. Arrange the kale in a single layer in the dish. A sprinkle of those chile flakes on top is nice here.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a medium saucepan set over medium-low heat, heat the milk/half and half combo along with the sliced shallot and garlic. Season with the remaining ½ teaspoon salt. When you see tiny bubbles emerge on the surface, take off the heat. Give the nutmeg a few gratings. Return the lid and let steep for about 10 minutes. (Plan B: Heat in the microwave for 1 minute with the sliced shallot and garlic. Cover with plastic to steep.)

In another medium saucepan set over medium heat, melt the butter. Whisk in the flour until there are no flecks; it should take just a few seconds for the roux to come together.

Add the seasoned milk mixture, stirring regularly to keep it from sticking to bottom of pan. Heat until the mixture thickens and has some body. Stir in the cheese until no longer visible. Take off the heat.

Pour the cheese sauce on top of the kale.

Finish with the breadcrumbs, and more cheese, if you like.

Bake until bubbly, about 20 minutes. For some color on top, finish under the broiler for 1 minutes. Eat hot.