



Bythams' Bacon, Leek and Cheese Bake

8 rashers of smoky bacon, cut into 3cm pieces

10 slices of thick white bread, crusts removed

30g butter approximately, softened (to butter the bread and grease the dish)

1 leek, finely sliced

1 tablespoon each of chopped fresh rosemary and thyme, or 2 teaspoons dried mixed herbs

8 eggs

600ml semi-skimmed milk

Salt and pepper

180g Cheddar cheese, grated

1. Preheat the oven to Gas mark 3/160C/320F.
2. Place leek in a jug and just cover with boiling water then microwave for 1 minute. Set aside.
3. Grease the base and sides of a 24cm X 18cm baking dish.
4. Dry fry the bacon in a frying pan for a couple of minutes until just cooked; set to one side.
5. Butter the slices of bread; set to one side.
6. Drain the leek slices well in a colander or sieve.
7. Mix the cheese, leeks and herbs in a bowl; set to one side.
8. Whisk the eggs, milk, salt and pepper in a jug; set to one side.
9. Place a layer of bread on the base of the dish - you may have to cut some slices to fit. Pour about a third of the egg/milk mixture on top, pressing the bread to soak it up.
10. Sprinkle one third of the herb and cheese mix and one half of the bacon over this bread layer.
11. Add another layer of bread, and sprinkle another third of the herb and cheese mix and remaining bacon over this bread layer.
12. Place a final layer of bread and pour over the remaining egg mixture, pressing the bread down so that the liquid is soaked up. Sprinkle the remaining herbs and cheese over the top and cover with foil.
13. Place the baking dish onto a baking tray and put into the oven for 40 minutes. After that time, remove the foil and cook for a further 10 - 20 minutes until the egg has set (test this by inserting a knife into the centre - it should come out clean) and the top is puffed and golden.
14. Cut into approximately 12 pieces. This dish can be eaten hot, warm or cold.