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## CAULIFLOWER GRATIN

Think of this dish as a slightly healthier potato gratin: all of the creamy, cheesy goodness, but with hearty, nutritious cauliflower filling the lead role. It's wonderful as an indulgent but not-too-guilty weekday meal, accompanied by a nice green salad and crusty bread, but it can also be a luxurious accompaniment to a beef roast or whole roasted chicken.

**SERVES 4 TO 6 AS A MAIN,  
6 TO 8 AS A SIDE  
40 MINUTES**

1 **MASTER RECIPE** Cauliflower (see below), just cooked or straight from the fridge  
3 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 clove garlic, minced  
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
¼ cup dry white wine  
1 ½ cups whole milk  
Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg  
½ teaspoon chopped thyme  
1 ½ cup grated Gruyère or sharp Cheddar  
Salt and freshly ground white pepper  
⅓ cup coarse bread crumbs (such as panko)  
Flaky sea salt, such as Maldon or fleur de sel, for garnish  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh Italian parsley, for garnish

Preheat the oven to 450°F.

Remove the cooked cauliflower from the bag, discarding any liquid in the bag, and thoroughly pat dry with paper towels. Use a paring knife or just your hands, cut or break the cauliflower into bite-size pieces. Set aside.

Heat 2 tablespoons of the butter in a medium pot over medium-low heat until bubbling. Add the garlic and cook, stirring constantly with a whisk, until fragrant but not browned, about 30 seconds. Add the flour and continue to stir, cooking for 1 minute. Add the wine and then add the milk in a steady stream, whisking constantly to avoid lumps. Increase the heat to medium and bring the sauce to a boil, stirring frequently. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes, until the sauce is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon.

Remove from the heat and stir in the nutmeg, thyme, and 1 cup of the Gruyère, whisking until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper, then stir in the cauliflower to coat.

Lightly grease an 8 by 8-inch baking dish or casserole with butter. Add the cauliflower and sauce mixture and spread it into an even layer with the back of a spoon or spatula. Sprinkle on the remaining ½ cup of Gruyère, followed by the bread crumbs. Dot with the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter, then transfer the dish to the oven. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until golden brown and bubbly. Sprinkle with the flaky sea salt and parsley. Let rest for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.



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## MASTER RECIPE: CAULIFLOWER

Cauliflower's hearty texture makes it a perfect blank canvas, so having bags of perfectly cooked al dente cauliflower steaks on hand is a great strategy for whipping up a substantial vegetarian main course or side dish in a matter of minutes. As with the other vegetables in this section, cooking cauliflower sous vide offers several advantages. Cauliflower in particular has a very short window before turning from raw to mushy. It can also be tricky to cook in a pan without the need to blanch it first or add water to the pan, which prevents browning. The even, precise temperature of a water bath means you'll always end up with tender cauliflower pieces that still hold their shape. This is especially helpful when your recipe calls for twice-cooking the cauliflower as in the case of the flash-fried Manchurian Cauliflower (not included) and the Greco-inspired grilled Cauliflower Steaks with Kalamata Yogurt Sauce (not included).

### SOUS VIDE COOKING TIME

25 minutes (or up to 1 hour)

### Ingredients:

1 large head cauliflower (or 2 small heads), about 2 ½ to 3 pounds

Salt

Preheat the water bath to 85°C (185°F).

Prepare the cauliflower by trimming away any outer leaves or discolored stem but leaving the core intact. Place the cauliflower on a cutting board and slice into 1 to 1 ½-inch-thick slices. Season the cauliflower slices with salt.

Gently transfer the cauliflower into a 1-gallon freezer-safe ziplock bag or a vacuum seal bag, keeping the slices as whole as possible (if they fall apart somewhat, it's okay). Arrange them in a single layer with as little overlap as possible to ensure even cooking.

Seal the bag using the water displacement method (see chef notes) or a vacuum sealer, adding weights to the bag as necessary (see chef notes) to ensure that it sinks.

When the water reaches the target temperature, lower the bagged cauliflower in the water bath (making sure the bag is fully submerged) and cook for 25 minutes (or up to 1 hour).

Remove the bag from the water bath, transfer it to an ice water bath (see chef notes), and chill until completely cold, about 30 minutes. Once cooked and chilled, the cauliflower can be refrigerated in the bag for up to 2 weeks. Alternatively, if you plan on using the just-cooked cauliflower in a spin-off recipe right away, let it rest in the bag for at least 10 minutes or up to 1 hour before proceeding.



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