

Season: Winter
 From the garden: Cauliflower, Leek, Garlic, Spinach
 Type: Main
 Difficulty: Medium
 Country of origin: USA
 Serves: 4 servings or 16 small tastes
 Source: My Food Bag

Equipment

- large saucepan
- medium saucepan
- chef's knife
- chopping board
- grater
- colander or sieve
- measuring cups
- garlic press
- frying pan
- wooden spoon
- whisk
- large serving bowl or individual bowls to serve

Ingredients

- Pinch salt
 - ½ cauliflower
 - 1 leek
 - 125g cheese – Tasty or Edam
 - 4 cups loosely packed spinach
 - 350g macaroni
 - 1 garlic clove
 - 1 Tablespoon butter or olive oil
 - ½ cup breadcrumbs
 - 1 Tablespoon butter
 - 3 Tablespoon flour
 - 2 ½ cups milk
 - salt and pepper to season
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How to make it

1. **Before you start**
 Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil.
2. **Prepare cauliflower, leek & cheese**
 Cut cauliflower into small pieces and then roughly chop. Cut leek in half, rinse the inside and make sure there is no dirt. Slice leek thinly and grate cheese.
3. **Prepare the spinach**
 Wash and roughly chop the spinach. Put the colander in the sink and put the spinach in it.
4. **Cook pasta**
 Add pasta to the saucepan of boiling water and cook for 8-10 minutes (or according to packet instructions) until just tender. **Caution – hot! Ask an adult to help you with this.** Add the cauliflower to the pasta to cook for the last 5 minutes of cooking time. Reserve ¼ cup of the pasta cooking water before draining the pasta. Drain pasta over the colander of chopped spinach to wilt the spinach.
5. **Prepare breadcrumbs**
 Mince or grate garlic clove. Place frying pan on a medium heat and add first measure of butter or oil to pan. Once the butter has melted, add garlic and breadcrumbs to pan and stir with a wooden spoon for 3-4 minutes, until mixture turns golden. **Caution – hot! Ask an adult to help you with this.** Once golden set aside.

6. Make sauce

- Add second measure of butter to the medium saucepan and cook leek for about 8 minutes, until softened. Add flour and stir for 1 minute, until sandy in colour. **Caution – hot! Ask an adult to help you with this.**
7. Very slowly add the milk, a little at a time, and whisk in well. Then add the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup reserved pasta water. Cook for 2 minutes, until thickened. Add cheese to sauce and stir to combine. Taste the sauce and season with salt and pepper to taste. Pour sauce into pasta pot with spinach and stir to coat pasta
8. Serve in individual bowls or one big serving bowl with a sprinkling of breadcrumbs.

Notes:

- This creamy white sauce made from butter, flour and milk is a classic French/Italian sauce called *bechamel*. Melting the butter and stirring in the flour makes a *roux* which thickens the sauce once you add the milk.
- It is very easy to get lumps in the sauce. Adding the milk slowly and whisking at the same time will help prevent this.

Skills:

- Boil, chop, slice, grate, fry, **whisk***

* whisk – whisking is a key skill a bechamel sauce without lumps. After you have made your roux with butter and flour and it has changed colour slightly in the pan, you need to whisk in the milk. Whisking rapidly will blend the ingredients to make a smooth sauce. Whisking can also be used to add air or change the structure of an ingredient, e.g. whisking egg whites turns them into a firm foam and whisking cream turns it from a liquid into whipped cream.