

## CHEESY HASSELBACK POTATO GRATIN

Because of variation in the shape of potatoes, the amount of potato that will fit into a single casserole dish varies. Longer, thinner potatoes will fill a dish more than shorter, rounder potatoes. When purchasing potatoes, buy a few extra in order to fill the dish if necessary. Depending on the exact shape and size of the potatoes and the casserole dish, you may not need all of the cream mixture.

### SERVES 8

3 ounces finely grated Comté or Gruyère cheese

2 ounces finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

2 cups heavy cream

2 medium cloves garlic, minced

1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves, roughly chopped

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

4 to 4½ pounds russet potatoes, peeled and sliced  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick on a mandoline slicer (7 to 8 medium, see the headnote)

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1. Adjust the oven rack to the middle position and preheat the oven to 400°F. Combine the cheeses in a large bowl. Transfer  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the cheese mixture to a separate bowl and set aside. Add the cream, garlic, and thyme to the cheese mixture. Season generously with salt and pepper. Add the potato slices and toss with your hands until every slice is coated with the cream mixture, making sure to separate any slices that are sticking together to get the cream mixture in between them.
2. Grease a 2-quart casserole dish with the butter. Pick up a handful of potatoes, organizing them into a neat stack, and lay them in the casserole dish with their edges aligned vertically. Continue placing potatoes in the dish, working around the perimeter and into the center until all the potatoes have been added. The potatoes should be very tightly packed. If necessary, slice an additional potato, coat it with the cream mixture, and add it to the casserole. Pour the excess cheese/cream mixture evenly over the potatoes until the mixture comes halfway up the sides of the casserole. You may not need all the excess liquid.
3. Cover the dish tightly with foil and transfer to the oven. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove the foil and continue baking until the top is pale golden brown, about 30 minutes longer. Carefully remove from the oven, sprinkle with the remaining cheese, and return to the oven. Bake until deep golden brown and crisp on top, about 30 minutes longer. Remove from the oven, let rest for a few minutes, and serve.

### Andrew's Best Potatoes:

- Use more Comté or Gruyère cheese.
- Don't bother with the Parmigiano-Reggiano