

Twice-baked soufflé

These soufflés have been a permanent fixture on my dinner-party standby list for years. They never fail to impress and you can even prepare them a day in advance: just pop them in the oven for a few minutes and they will miraculously rise again.

50g unsalted butter
½ cup (75g) plain flour
2 cups (500ml) milk
Pinch of grated nutmeg
4 eggs, separated,
plus 1 extra eggwhite
150g baby spinach leaves,
blanched, squeezed dry
120g soft goat's cheese,
crumbled
½ cup (40g) finely grated
parmesan cheese
½ cup (125ml) pure
[thin] cream
⅓ cup (35g) toasted walnuts
Micro salad leaves*, to serve

Preheat the oven to 180°C and grease six 1-cup (250ml) dariole moulds or ovenproof teacups.

Melt the butter in a saucepan over low heat and add the flour. Cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Whisk in the milk, nutmeg and some salt and pepper. Bring to just below boiling point, then whisk for 2 minutes or until very thick and smooth. Add the egg yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in the blanched spinach, goat's cheese and half the parmesan.

In a clean, dry bowl, whisk the 5 eggwhites with a pinch of salt until soft peaks form. Fold one-third of the eggwhite into the cheese mixture to loosen, then fold in the remaining eggwhite until just combined.

Place the moulds in a baking dish and divide the soufflé mixture among them. Run your finger around the inside edge of the mould (this will ensure the soufflés will rise evenly), then pour in enough boiling water to come halfway up the sides of the moulds. Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes until puffed and golden. Remove from the baking dish, cool, then invert onto a greased baking tray. The soufflés can be chilled at this stage for up to 24 hours, if desired.

When almost ready to serve, preheat the oven to 180°C.

Pour cream over the soufflés and sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup (20g) parmesan. Bake soufflés for 10-12 minutes until puffed and golden. Scatter with walnuts and salad leaves and serve immediately. **Makes 6**

* Micro salad leaves are available from farmers' markets and selected greengrocers.