

# Butternut Gratin

By Mimi Thorisson

I'm as fond as anyone of a simple steak frites dinner. Sometimes I make a Béarnaise sauce, but sometimes, especially if the wine is good, it's enough to serve the steak with just a spoonful of Dijon mustard. I always have some greens to go with it, steamed haricots verts or spinach or just a simple salad. Sometimes I have a small steak and lots of spinach. That's when my husband thinks I've read some article and I'm suddenly on a diet. But that would never happen. It's just that sometimes French fries are...well, not exactly what I am looking for, and then I need an alternative. If it's pumpkin season, this gratin is one of the best. Steak pairs really well with roasted squash, and this gratin version makes the duo even more satisfying.

Serves 4

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for the baking dish
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 pound butternut squash (about 1 large), peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, and thinly sliced
- 1/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 3/4 cups fresh bread crumbs
- 3/4 cups grated Comté cheese
- A few fresh chives, finely chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F/180° C. Butter a 10-inch/25-centimeter baking dish.
2. In a large sauté pan, heat 2 tablespoons of the butter over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook until soft and translucent, 4 minutes. Add the squash slices and nutmeg and cook until slightly tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Transfer the squash mixture to the baking dish. Pour the cream all over, sprinkle the bread crumbs and cheese on top, and dot with the remaining 1 tablespoon butter.
4. Bake until golden and bubbly, 25 to 30 minutes. Serve immediately, sprinkled with the chives.