

Creamed Fish au Gratin

3 pounds turbot, cod, or halibut fillets	7 tablespoons butter
1 bottle clam juice	½ cup flour
3 cups milk	2 egg yolks
1 cup white wine	½ cup heavy cream
1 sliced onion	½ teaspoon nutmeg
2 parsley sprigs	½ teaspoon lemon juice
3 thyme sprigs	Sea salt and white pepper to taste
Piece of lemon peel	12-18 small potatoes
6 peppercorns	1½ cups grated Parmigiano
1 bay leaf	

For the Court Bouillon

In a large kettle, bring the clam juice, milk, white wine, onion, parsley, thyme, peppercorns, and bay leaf to a boil. Lower the heat, and simmer the bouillon for 10-15 minutes. Add the fish fillets and cook just until they begin to flake easily. Remove the fillets to a plate with a slotted implement. Strain the solids out of the bouillon and discard them. Flake the fish, being certain to remove any bones or skin, and set aside.

For the Velouté Sauce

Heat the court bouillon liquid in saucepan. Melt the butter in a large heavy pot, and whisk in the flour, cooking for several minutes without allowing it to brown. Bring the court bouillon to a boil, and add it to the flour-butter mixture, whisking constantly until it is smooth and thick.

In a small bowl beat the egg yolks and the cream together. Gradually beat a cup of the thickened sauce into the egg yolks and cream to gently warm it. Then beat that mixture into the velouté sauce, continuing to cook very gently.

Season the sauce with fresh-grated nutmeg, lemon juice, and sea salt and white pepper to taste. If you feel the sauce is too thick, thin it out with a little bit of extra cream. Keep the sauce hot. Just before assembling the dish, fold in ½ cup Parmigiano into the hot sauce.

Assembling the Dish

Boil the small potatoes in their jackets in a large pot of water until just cooked through. Remove the potatoes from the water, cool slightly, then peel off the jackets.

Place an oven rack in the upper part of the oven, and preheat the oven to 400°.

Butter a large baking dish, and spread a layer of the velouté sauce over the bottom. Place the peeled potatoes around the edges of the dish. Spread the flaked fish in the middle of the dish. Cover the dish, including the potatoes, with the remainder of the velouté sauce. Sprinkle the remaining cup of Parmigiano over the entire dish.

Place the casserole in the oven until bubbling. If it does not create a nice golden browned top in the oven after 6-10 minutes, place the casserole under a broiler for a minute or two to brown.

The dish should serve 6 people.