

[Leek, Ham and Cheese Egg Bake](#)

By food blogger Deb Perelman of www.smittenkitchen.com

Serves: 10-12

From Ms. Perelman - One big note, as I failed on this both times so do as I say and not as I did, is to Beware the Weep. Eggs baked too long can emit a watery run-off, which I, a non-food-scientist so feel free to chime and correct/clarify, understand comes from proteins in the eggs over coagulating. To avoid this, bake this just until it's done and the safest way to do that is to start checking in before you need to (I've suggested this in the recipe). It's done when no liquid egg seeps into the gap formed where a knife inserted into the center and turned or pulled back slightly or a temperature of 165 to 170 degrees. Should your eggs weep, you'll see this at the bottom of the dish as a little puddle that will have absolutely no effect whatsoever on the taste; it's just a thing that will bother you, the cook.

Ingredients

1 tablespoon butter, plus more for greasing baking dish
6 medium-large leeks or 3 leeks and 2 small yellow onions, diced (just white and pale green parts from leeks; leeks washed well)
1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil
12 large eggs
3 1/3 cups milk, preferably whole
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3/4-pound grated cheese (I use a mix of gruyere and Comte)
10 ounces cooked ham, diced very small

Directions

Heat oven to 350 degrees F and butter a large (9×13-inch, 3-quart or more) baking dish.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil and a tablespoon of butter. Once hot, add leeks (and onions, if using) and season generously with salt (I use a full teaspoon kosher salt) and pepper. Cook, stirring, until they're tender, sweet and just starting to brown, about 10 to 15 minutes. Lower heat to medium-low if they're picking up color too quickly.

Beat eggs with salt (I used another teaspoon kosher salt, adjust to taste) and a lot of freshly ground black pepper. Whisk in milk.

Assemble by layering in prepared dish: 1/3 of grated cheese, 1/2 of each leeks and ham, next 1/3 cheese, remaining leeks and ham. Pour eggs over then sprinkle remaining cheese over the top. Bake until gently set in center, being careful about overbaking (see note up top). It's done when no liquid egg seeps into the gap formed where a knife inserted into the center and turned or pulled back slightly or a temperature of 165 to 170 degrees. Start checking at 55 minutes and then every 5 minutes after that until it's done. Mine took a total of 65 minutes. Should the top brown too much before the center is set, put foil over the baking dish for remaining baking time.

Let rest on a cooling rack for 5 to 10 minutes before serving, or risk a room full of burned tongues. (It packs serious heat!) Serve in squares or scoops.