

Mustard Creamed Onions

(from Cold-Weather Cooking)

These are a tangy, golden-hued twist on the classic version of pale white creamed onions. The standard cream sauce is laced with both grainy and strong Dijon mustards and the dish is topped with a whisper of freshly grated Parmesan cheese and warm sprinkling of russet-colored paprika.

2 lbs small white onions, peeled
3 cups water
3 tbs unsalted butter
3 tbs unbleached all-purpose flour
1 cup milk
3 tbs medium-dry or cream Sherry
1 tbs grainy Dijon mustard
1 tbs smooth Dijon mustard
Pinch grated nutmeg
Salt and freshly ground white pepper to taste
3 tbs snipped fresh chives
3 tbs freshly grated Parmesan cheese
2 tsp sweet Hungarian paprika

1. Place the onions in a medium-size saucepan, cover with the water, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer uncovered until the onions are just barely tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the cooking liquid.

2. Prepare the cream sauce: Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in the flour and cook, stirring constantly, 2 minutes. Gradually whisk in first the reserved cooking liquid, then the milk and Sherry to make a smooth sauce. Swirl in both mustards and season with the nutmeg, salt and pepper. Simmer stirring occasionally over low heat to allow the flavors to blend, 7 to 10 minutes. Stir in the chives and remove from the heat.

3. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a gratin dish large enough to hold the onions in a single layer.

4. Combine the mustard cream sauce with the onions and transfer to the prepared dish. Sprinkle the top with the Paresan and paprika. (The dish may be prepared up to this point 2 days in advance and refrigerated until baking time. Bring the dish to room temperature prior to baking.)

5. Bake the creamed onions until the sauce is bubbling and the top is golden brown, about 30 minutes. Serve hot.

Makes 8 to 10 servings.