

A cheese for all seasons

by Lydia Lovell



Cauliflower Au Bleu Cheese accomplished her purpose. This dish, although inappropriate to serve to dieters, is especially good with baked ham.

1 large cauliflower
4 oz. bleu cheese
1 small onion,
chopped fine
¼ C. butter

3 T. flour
1 C. milk
4 slices thick lean bacon
(optional)

Prepare and cook cauliflower in boiling salted water for 20 minutes. Drain well, reserving ½ C. cooking liquid. Place cauliflower in an ovenproof dish and keep hot. Crumble the cheese and divide in half. Melt butter, add onion cook five minutes without browning. Remove from heat and add flour, stirring until smooth. Add milk and reserved cooking liquid. Return to heat and bring to a BOIL, STIRRING. Cook, stirring, two minutes. Add half of cheese. Adjust seasonings. Pour sauce over cauliflower and keep hot. Sprinkle with remaining cheese and run under broiler for a couple of minutes until bubbly. Serve immediately to four. If not serving with ham, fry bacon until crisp; drain and crumble over top before broiling.

Occasionally Aunt Olivia found herself alone at lunchtime when Uncle Henry was attending a luncheon meeting in which she had no interest. A **Bleu Cheese Club Sandwich** might well be her choice when she wanted an easy to fix lunch, hearty enough to match that which Uncle Henry would be eating at the restaurant.

3 thick slices of homemade
white bread
Butter
2 lettuce leaves

2 thin slices cooked ham
2 oz. bleu cheese
1 sliced tomato

Toast bread on both sides; remove crusts. Butter each slice of toast on one side. Arrange lettuce on one slice. Fold each slice of ham into thirds and arrange side-by-side on lettuce. Top with second slice of toast, butter side down. Butter top of toast. Slice cheese and tomato thinly and arrange as the third layer. Cover with the third slice of toast, butter side down. Cut into triangles. Excellent with a tall glass of cold milk. Have an apple for dessert. Substitute cold sliced tongue for ham in this sandwich if you prefer.

Not even the most fervent aficionado of bleu cheese would use it in more than one course at any meal, but so versatile is this strongly flavored cheese that it lends its compatibility to dessert courses as well as appetizers, starters, and main dishes. **Pears with Bleu Cheese** are as delicious a way to top off a hearty dinner as apples with cheddar.

Allow at least one pear per person; if serving informally, pass a fruit bowl of bananas, pears, and two or three different kinds of grapes heaped on top; then offer wedges of cheese. Bleu with pears is elegantly good, a sophisticated finale to wrap up a rich meal.

Bon appetit.

quantity on hand to insure its freshness. Because we were all fond of Danish Bleu cheese, Aunt Olivia used it often. She bought only a little at a time and used it all up within a week. To store it in the refrigerator, she wrapped it carefully in waxed paper. Today we use plastic film or aluminum foil. Another of her secrets of success with cheese was the knowledge that it tastes best at room temperature, so at least half-an-hour before serving, cheese dressings and spreads were set out to warm gradually.

Uncle Henry particularly appreciated **Bleu Cheese Pudding** which Aunt Olivia sometimes served as a first course and sometimes as an entre. She prepared it this way.

¼ C. margarine
2 T. chopped onion
¼ C. flour
1 C. milk
½ C. bleu cheese
salt and pepper to taste

4 large eggs
¼ C. fresh white soft
breadcrumbs
½t. Worcestershire sauce
2 T. chopped parsley

Preheat oven to 375°. Lightly butter a one-quart casserole. Melt margarine in a medium saucepan, add onion and cook for three minutes until soft. Remove pan from heat and stir in flour until smooth. Add milk, stirring until smooth. Return to heat and bring to a boil. Cook, stirring, two minutes. Crumble in cheese. Beat well to melt cheese. Remove from heat. Separate eggs; stir yolks into sauce. Add crumbs, Worcestershire, and parsley. Adjust seasoning. Whisk egg whites until stiff and fold into mixture. Pour into a casserole and place on top rack of oven. Bake 30 minutes until pudding is firm to touch. Serves four for a main course or eight as a "starter."

Cauliflower was never a favorite vegetable in the Lovell household, but since it is rich in potassium and "good for what ails you," Aunt Olivia did her best to make it palatable.

Only small quantities of cheese were made at home in this part of the country, even though most families in the years before supermarkets and convenience stores dotted the landscape, kept at least one cow. Cheese is made from raw milk, not pasteurized, so unless you can find a supply straight from the cow, you will have no success making any but farmer's or cottage cheeses.

If you're determined to try it, however, and can put your hands on a gallon bucket of warm milk, straight from the cow, add to it two tablespoons of rennet water or one rennet tablet. Cover the pail and set in a warm place until a thick curd forms, about 30 to 40 minutes, and the whey (the liquid part) looks clear and greenish, and separates. Wash your hands thoroughly, rinse and dry them well, and gently press all the curd to one side of the pail. Ask someone to help you by dipping out and discarding the whey. When the curd is pressed as dry as possible, pour it into a good-sized linen bag. Hang the bag until no more whey can be pressed out; then transfer the curd to a wooden bowl and chop fine. Empty the chopped curd into a fine-meshed double thickness cheese-cloth bag, and place inside a circular wooden form with a perforated base and a cover that fits snugly inside the form's circumference. The cheesecloth bag should fit closely, in size and shape, the form. Place the cover on the cheese and lay heavy weights on the cover. Let stand for an hour.

Remove curds, chop again, and add salt to taste. Have ready a clean fresh cheesecloth bag soaking in water. Pack the bag tightly with curds. Cover the top of the bag with a circular piece of fabric and baste all around, pulling cover smooth on top.

Scald the wooden form and its cover with boiling water; then rinse with cold. Again put the cheese into the press, this time overnight. In the morning, take out the cheese, rub all sides with salt, and slip into a clean wet bag. Allow to rest in a cool, dry place until next morning; then look at the cheese and pare off any rough edges. Return to press for the final treatment. Leave it under weights for another day. Remove bag. Rub cheese thoroughly with butter and lay on a shelf in a cool, dry place. Wipe clean and rub with butter every day for a week, being certain to flip the cake of cheese over each day. At the end of one week omit greasing, just rub hard with a coarse cloth. Do this every day for a month. At the end of the month, your cheese is ready to serve but for best flavor, allow it to age six months before cutting.

If you don't want to go to all that bother, all kinds of fine cheeses are to be found at your dairy counter. If time and energy are valuable to you, this alternate is highly recommended.

Aunt Olivia knew how to make cheese, but like me, she usually purchased whatever she needed, keeping only a small