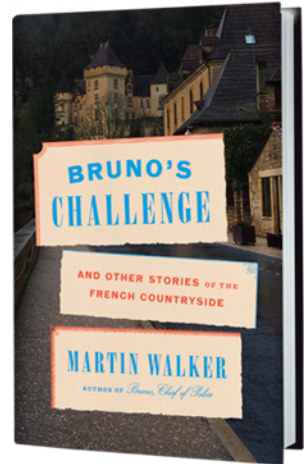




BRUNO'S COMFORTING CHEESE GRATIN

Nothing is cozier than curling up with a good book and some delicious, comforting food—and reading Martin Walker's delightful Bruno, Chief of Police series makes it all the more cheerful. In *Bruno's Challenge*, Walker treats us to a hearty serving of short stories featuring the lovable French detective as he travels the Dordogne in search of clues, wine, and a delightful dinner. We suggest pairing this collection with a cheese gratin, perfect for warming your stomach while Bruno's tales warm your heart.



INGREDIENTS:

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| 4 oz crisped bacon, crumbled | 12 fl oz milk |
| 2 oz fresh breadcrumbs | 5 fl oz single cream |
| 2 tablespoons olive oil | 4 oz butter |
| 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves | 2 ½ oz flour |
| 6 oz cheese — grated Cheddar or Parmesan | A light grating of nutmeg |
| 500g/1 lb bunch chard (Rainbow chard is prettiest), leaves pulled off, stalks sliced diagonally 2 cm/1 in wide | Salt and white pepper to taste |

METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 150°C/300°F.
2. Raise oven temperature to 200°C/390°F.
3. Combine breadcrumbs and 2 tablespoons of oil in a frying pan. Toss over medium heat, until golden brown and crisp. Off heat, add the thyme and 1oz cheese and season. Mix in the bacon pieces and set aside.
4. Blanch the chard stalks in boiling salted water for about 5 minutes then remove stalks and put them into a bowl of cold water. Put the leaves into the boiling water and drain as soon as they wilt. Then squeeze out as much liquid as possible. Drain the stalks from the cold water, mix with the leaves and set aside.
5. Heat the milk and cream to just sizzling. Melt 2½ oz butter in a heavy-bottomed pan, add the flour and stir till sandy and gold. Slowly pour in the hot, creamy milk, stirring till it begins to boil and form a medium-thick bechamel sauce. Beat in the remaining cheese and seasonings.
6. Butter a gratin dish with the remaining butter. Fold the chard into the sauce, pour into the dish and sprinkle the breadcrumbs over. Bake for 15-20 minutes till bubbling and gold.

Serves 4-6