

 **Preparation:** 30 mins + cooling
Cooking/baking: approx. 45 mins

 **Serves:** 6

 **Difficulty:** easy



Bacon & leek farmhouse bake

Creamy leeks, smoky bacon and a golden, cheesy mash base: this is comfort food well worth switching the oven on for. There's a little prep involved, as the mash and leeks need time to cool before everything comes together, but you can get ahead by tackling that part earlier in the day. And if you have leftovers, you're in luck – another turn in the oven gives this bake a lovely extra crunch.

INGREDIENTS

For the base:

- 3 large potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 140g cheddar, grated
- 4 eggs
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the topping:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 4 medium leeks, trimmed, washed and diced
- 6 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 12 bacon rashers
- 300ml crème fraîche
- 80g pecorino, grated
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

RECIPE

1. Put the potatoes and sweet potatoes in a large saucepan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Simmer for approximately 15 minutes, or until tender. Drain thoroughly, allow the steam to escape for a few minutes, then mash until smooth. Season and set aside to cool completely.
2. Meanwhile, warm the olive oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Add the leeks and cook gently for 3 minutes, then include the garlic and cook for another 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add a splash of water, reduce the heat and cover. Cook for a further 5 minutes, or until the leeks are soft. Remove the lid and let any excess liquid evaporate, then set aside to cool.
3. Grill the bacon until cooked and lightly crisp. Allow to cool slightly, then cut into small pieces.
4. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6 and line a large, shallow tray with baking paper.
5. Stir the cheddar and eggs into the cooled mash until well combined. Spoon the mash onto the prepared tray and spread into an even rectangle.
6. Stir the crème fraîche, pecorino and bacon into the cooled leeks. Season with black pepper and a little salt if needed – the bacon and cheese will already add some saltiness.
7. Spoon the leek mixture over the mash, spreading it evenly across the base.
8. Bake on the second shelf from the bottom for approximately 30 minutes, or until the base is set, the edges are golden and the topping is bubbling.
9. Leave to settle for 5 minutes, then cut into six portions and serve. If you're lucky enough to have leftovers, allow them to cool, then cover and refrigerate for the following day. Reheat in the oven until steaming hot throughout.

