



ANSON MILLS

Cheddared Grits Casserole

Yield

6 to 8 side dish portions

Time

Overnight to soak the grits, about 45 minutes to cook, and 45 minutes to bake

Cooking Remarks

The grits will require intermittent bursts of hydration in the form of hot water added in ¼-cup increments approximately four times during the cooking process. You'll know it is time to add water when the grits thicken up but the beads are not yet tender. Cook the grits slowly and never allow them to venture close to a frank simmer, let alone a boil.

To reheat leftovers, transfer the grits to a smaller baking dish (one that holds them snugly in a single layer), moisten lightly with half-and-half by drizzling it around the perimeter of the baking dish, and heat in a 300-degree oven until warmed throughout, 20 to 30 minutes.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a box grater, a heavy-bottomed 3- to 4-quart saucepan, a tea strainer, a wooden spoon, a shallow broilersafe 2-quart casserole dish, a 2-cup liquid measuring cup, a rubber spatula, and a small offset spatula.

Ingredients

2 cups (12 ounces) Anson Mills Colonial Coarse Pencil Cob Grits
4 cups spring or filtered water
1¼ teaspoons fine sea salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons (1 ounce) unsalted European-style butter, room temperature, plus additional for greasing the casserole dish
1 large egg, beaten
½ cup half-and-half
3 cups (5 ounces) shredded aged Cheddar cheese

Directions

1. The night before you make the casserole, turn the grits into a heavy-bottomed 3- to 4-quart saucepan, pour the water over them, and stir. Using a tea strainer, skim off and discard the chaff and hulls that rise to the surface. Cover the pan and let the grits soak overnight at room temperature.
2. The next day, bring a kettleful of water to a boil. Set the saucepan holding the grits over medium-high heat and bring to a simmer, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the grits begin to tighten under the surface of the water, 5 to 8 minutes. Stir vigorously to smooth

them out and reduce the heat to low; the surface movement should essentially be nonexistent, but steady intermittent plumes of steam should rise from beneath the surface. As the grits cook, they will become stouter and begin to *bloop bloop* on the surface. This will occur well before the grits are done. As the grits absorb the liquid and stiffen, they will require additional water, so be prepared to add four ¼-cup installments of hot water from the kettle at intervals. About 30 minutes into cooking, the bead of the grits will begin to soften. Stir in the salt and pepper. Continue to cook until the until the grits are just tender and have become creamy but are stout enough to hold a wooden spoon upright, about 45 minutes; they should leave a wide streak on the bottom of the pan when stirred. Remove from the heat.

3. Adjust oven racks to the middle and uppermost positions and heat the oven to 325 degrees. Butter a shallow broilersafe 2-quart casserole dish and set aside.

4. In a 2-cup liquid measuring cup, whisk together the egg and half-and-half. Little by little, whisk ⅔ cup of the hot grits into the egg mixture to temper it, then whisk the tempered egg mixture into the hot grits in the saucepan. Stir 2 cups of the cheese and the butter into the grits. The mixture will be heavy. Using a rubber spatula, scrape the grits into the prepared casserole dish and smooth the top slightly with a small offset spatula. Bake the grits on the lower oven rack until firm, about 45 minutes.

5. Remove the dish from the oven and heat the broiler. Sprinkle the remaining 1 cup of cheese over the casserole and bake on the upper rack until the surface is nicely browned, about 30 seconds. Serve without delay.