



Melt, Stretch, & Sizzle

THE ART OF
COOKING CHEESE

Tia Keenan • Foreword by Kat Kinsman



Kugel with Cottage Cheese, Leeks, & Dill

COMFORT CHEESE

Cottage cheese was a favorite of early colonial settlers, who made it at home in their *kwatages*. I especially love it with warm egg noodles, a habit formed as a kid in my own home and at the homes of Jewish friends, where it was served as kugel. Over the years, I've gussied up the basic concept by adding *crème fraîche*, leeks melted in butter, and a sizable amount of dill (by far my favorite fresh herb). Lemon zest lends brightness, and a flurry of creamy feta adds salt and soul. My cottage-cheese-and-noodle dish is good enough for company as my grandmother would say while still satisfying my nostalgic craving.

Kosher salt

8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, plus more for greasing the baking dish

4 leeks, trimmed, halved lengthwise, and thinly sliced (about 2 cups)

3 garlic cloves, minced

¼ teaspoon white pepper

12 ounces wide egg noodles

4 eggs, lightly beaten

24 ounces cottage cheese (about 3 cups)

8 ounces *crème fraîche*, such as Vermont Creamery (1 cup)

1 tablespoon lemon zest

4 ounces feta, crumbled (about ¾ cups)

¾ cup finely chopped fresh dill

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Butter a 3-quart or 9 x 13-inch baking dish.

In a medium sauté pan over medium heat, melt 2 tablespoons of the butter until foaming. Add the leeks and cook, stirring occasionally, until the leeks are bright green and slightly wilted, about 5 minutes. Stir in 2 more tablespoons of the butter, garlic, and white pepper and continue to cook until the leeks are very soft, another 5 minutes.

(continued)