

THE GREATEST CREAMED GREENS

Serves 4 to 6

My love for creamed greens is directly related to my love for old-school steakhouses, which is deep and unwavering. There, the creamed greens are often so rich and decadent you can hardly eat more than a spoonful, but at my steakhouse (which is my regular house), the wilted greens are tossed with just enough simmered cream to count as creamed, so luckily, you can eat the whole thing.

¾ cup freshly made coarse bread crumbs or panko (optional)

2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more if using bread crumbs

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 cup heavy cream

4 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed

⅛ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

2 large bunches kale, mustard greens, spinach, broccoli rabe, or swiss chard, thick stems removed, coarsely chopped (about 16 cups total)

½ cup crème fraîche

1. If using bread crumbs, toss them in a small bowl with 3 tablespoons of olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Toast them in a large skillet over medium-high heat, tossing frequently until they're well toasted and crisped, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.
2. Bring the cream to a simmer in a medium pot over medium heat. Add the garlic and nutmeg and season with salt and pepper. Simmer until reduced by about half, 15 to 20 minutes; it should be thick and very, very rich (it'll dilute a bit once you add it to the greens).
3. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the greens, a handful at a time, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, adding more greens when the ones in the skillet wilt down. Stir frequently, until all the greens are bright green and the water starts to evaporate, 5 to 8 minutes, depending on the type of greens. Continue to cook until most of the water has evaporated and they're totally tender, another 5 minutes or so.
4. Add the cream mixture and crème fraîche, season with salt and pepper, and mix to evenly coat everything in the thick, creamy business. Cook a minute or two to make sure everything is hot before transferring to a bowl. Scatter with the bread crumbs, if using, and serve.

DO AHEAD

Creamed greens can be made a few hours in advance, stored loosely covered at room temperature. Rewarm over medium heat before topping with the bread crumbs.