

Corn Pudding with Bacon, White Cheddar & Chives

6 oz (about 9 slices) bacon
3 tbsp vegetable oil
1 cup finely chopped onion
4 cups corn kernels (scraped from 7 to 8 ears of corn)
2 tsp minced garlic
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
4 large eggs
2 cups half-and-half cream
2 cups (8 oz) grated sharp white cheddar cheese (divided) – or whatever shredded cheese you have
1 tbsp chopped chives, for garnish

Butter a shallow 2 quart oven-to-table baking dish.

In large, heavy skillet over medium heat, sauté bacon until golden and crisp. Remove and drain on paper towels. Coarsely chop bacon and reserve.

Pour off and discard all the bacon drippings, then add vegetable oil to same skillet. Place skillet over medium-high heat. When oil is hot, add onion and sauté, stirring until slightly softened, about 2 minutes.

Add corn and cook, stirring until corn is lightly browned, about 8 minutes.

Add garlic and sauté, stirring 1 minute more.

Remove from heat and stir in salt and cayenne pepper. Set aside.

In large bowl, whisk eggs and half-and-half together until blended. Stir in corn mixture, reserved bacon, and all but 1/3 cup of the cheese. Mix well. Transfer to the baking dish. Sprinkle remaining 1/3 cup cheese over the top of the pudding.

Bake in 350 degree oven until a knife or tester inserted into middle comes out clean, and top is slightly brown, 35 to 40 minutes. Remove and cool 5 minutes.

(Pudding can be prepared a day ahead. Cool, cover and refrigerate. Reheat, uncovered, in a preheated 350 degree oven 20 minutes or longer.)

To serve, sprinkle chives over top of corn pudding.
Serve warm.