

# Pearl Onions au Gratin

SERVES 8

This is a great dish to serve with a big roasted bird, such as Spice-Rubbed Roast Goose or a turkey.

2 pounds red or white pearl onions  
3 thick strips bacon, finely diced  
1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
2 small shallots, finely chopped  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1 1/2 cups heavy cream  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper  
3/4 cup panko (Japanese bread crumbs) or coarse dry bread crumbs 2  
tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley

Heat the oven to 350°F.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the onions and cook for 5 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold water. Use a sharp knife to trim off the root ends, then pinch the onions to remove the skins.

In a medium deep skillet, cook the bacon over medium-high heat until the fat is rendered, 3 to 4 minutes. Pour the bacon fat into a heatproof cup and reserve 1 1/2 teaspoons. Drain the bacon on paper towels.

Add the butter to the skillet along with the shallots and garlic. Cook over medium heat, stirring, until softened, about 3 minutes. Add the cream and simmer until reduced by half, about 10 minutes; season with salt and pepper.

Transfer the pearl onions to a large shallow baking dish and cover with the cream mixture. In a small bowl, toss the panko with the bacon, parsley, and the reserved bacon fat. Season lightly with salt and pepper.

Spread the crumb mixture over the onions, bake until the crumbs are toasted and the cream is bubbling, about 30 minutes, and serve.

## MAKE AHEAD:

-The onions can be blanched and peeled up to a day ahead. Refrigerate them, covered with plastic wrap, but bring them to room temperature before baking. -  
You can also crisp the bacon a day ahead, though it sure is tough not to eat it.

*Adapted from Stir: Mixing It Up in the Italian Tradition by Barbara Lynch and published by Houghton Mifflin*