

Onion, Leek, and Cabbage Panade

Serves 6-8 | 20 minutes prep + 3 hours cook time

Panade is French peasant food. The simplest version, dry bread slowly cooked with water and salt, sometimes an egg stirred in at the end, squeezed one last meal from a stale loaf of bread. Some think that adding caramelized onions and cheese led to the iconic French onion soup.

The resemblance to traditional bread stuffing (or dressing, depending on your regional preference) makes panade perfect for a holiday feast. But as legendary cook and author Richard Olney noted, an onion panade makes a hearty winter meal. “A young dry white wine, a slightly chilled Beaujolais or an icy beer are all appropriate accompaniments,” he wrote in the New York Times almost 50 years ago, “Add a salad. Put a bowl of apples on the table. It is as simple as that.”

4 medium onions, halved and sliced

2-3 leeks, halved lengthwise and sliced

½ head green cabbage, chopped

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

3-4 cups dried bread cubes

2 tablespoon Daphne & Chloe thyme flowers, crumbled

1 teaspoon sea salt

1 quart Aneto vegetable or chicken broth

4 oz Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, grated

4 oz Caciotta cheese, grated (or sharp white cheddar)

Step 1 Set your oven to 325F.

Step 2 Cook the onions and leeks in the olive oil over low heat for at least 45 minutes (longer is better), stirring occasionally, until the onions are darkly caramelized. If they begin to scorch, add a few spoonfuls of water and keep cooking.

Step 3 Combine the onion-leek mix, chopped cabbage, dried bread, thyme, salt, and grated cheeses in a large bowl. Mix well.

Step 4 Transfer to a deep casserole pan or Dutch oven spread evenly.

Step 5 Carefully pour the broth into the pan until it's just below the surface of the top layer. Use more broth or water if needed.

Step 6 Place a sheet of parchment paper on top of the panade, then cover loosely with foil (or place the lid on the Dutch oven). Bake for 2 hours, then remove from the oven to check. The edges should be lightly browned, and the panade should be soft and moist.

Step 7 Remove the foil and parchment paper, turn up the oven to 375F, and cook until the top is nicely browned, about 20 minutes.