Sweet Potato Gratin

The Sweet Potatoes

1 cup heavy whipping cream
1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh thyme
grated zest of 1 lemon
4 sweet potatoes - all the same size around the middle (about 3-4 lbs.)
salt
4-peppercorn mix (you can get it already in a grinder in most grocery stores)
butter for greasing pan

The Topping

4 oz. dark chocolate, chopped (I used 75% to lovely results, but you could use any dark chocolate you like)
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup salted butter
¾ tsp. ground nutmeg
1 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350° Fahrenheit. Butter a 9" x 13" baking pan. Measure out your cream and add the thyme and lemon zest. Stir it about to combine, then let it steep while you prepare the potatoes.

Peel the sweet potatoes and cut them into 1/8th" thick rounds. A mandolin or food processor make this much easier than doing it all with a knife but go with what you have. Use one potato's worth of circles to cover the bottom of the baking pan, overlapping the slices evenly. Pour ¼ cup of the cream over the potatoes, sprinkle liberally with salt and pepper, then make a second layer of potatoes. Continue with the layering of potatoes, ¼ cup of cream, salt, and pepper until you have four layers in your pan. Sprinkle the chocolate evenly over the top.

Make a streusel topping by combining the brown sugar, flour nutmeg and butter in a medium mixing bowl. With your fingers, work the butter into the dry ingredients until you have a mixture that holds together in crumbles. Add the pecans. Spread the streusel evenly over the chocolate. Sprinkle again with salt and pepper. Put in the oven and bake for about one hour, until the sweet potatoes are tender (you can test this by sticking a knife in the middle. If it goes in easily, they are done) and the topping is golden brown.

Serve warm or at room temperature.

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