

## **SWISS CHARD STALKS WITH PARMESAN CHEESE**

*(From The Classic Italian Cook Book)*

2 bunches mature Swiss chard, the ones with the broadest stalks  
¼ cup butter  
2/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
Salt

1. Pull off all the leaves from the Swiss chard stalks. Do not discard the leaves; they make an excellent salad. Wash the stalks in cold water, trimming away any remaining leaves, and cut them in lengths of about 4".
2. Drop in abundant boiling salted water and cook for approximately 30 minutes. (They should be tender but firm because they will undergo additional cooking in the oven.)
3. Preheat oven to 400° F. Smear a rectangular bake-and-serve dish with butter. Arrange a layer of stalks on the bottom of the dish, laying them end to end. Trim them to fit if necessary. Sprinkle lightly with salt and grated Parmesan cheese and dot with butter. Place another layer of stalks over this, season as above, and continue building up the layers until you've used up all the stalks. The top layer should be generously sprinkled with Parmesan and well dotted with butter.
4. Place the dish in the upper third of the preheated oven. Bake for 15 minutes, or until the top layer acquires a light, golden crust. This dish is at its most agreeable in texture and flavor when warm, but not too hot, so allow it to settle and cool a bit before bringing to the table.

*Serves 4.*