Comma practice:

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Paragraph #1 & 2—Find the commas. Label the comma rule used by the author.

Paragraph 3 & 4—Add the commas and label with the rule used.

Paragraph 5—Use this paragraph to write your own on any topic. 10712

**“Fixing a Leek” SEPTEMBER 9, 2008 BY**[**MOLLY WIZENBERG**](https://www.bonappetit.com/search?contributor=Molly%20Wizenberg) **from Bon Appetit**

It was barely noon on our first day in Brussels when we spotted the leeks. We'd stopped at a small grocery store to buy some bottled water, and as we stood in line to pay, my husband noticed a large wooden crate by the cash registers.

"Look at those," he said, pointing. The crate was piled high with leeks, firm and glossy as piano keys, their leaves plump and freshly trimmed, a deep shade of green. Their tiny, hair-like roots were still tangled endearingly with damp mud, as though they'd just been pulled from the bed. My husband and I don't always swoon over the same things—he will never share my love for Duran Duran's "Hungry Like the Wolf," and I will never understand his insatiable passion for hot sauce—but these were stunning specimens. I'd never seen such gorgeous leeks outside of a farmers' market, much less near the cash register of a grocery store, a strategic spot where most American stores stock chewing gum, batteries, and packs of candy. I have nothing against any of those things—especially not the candy—but these Belgians were clearly onto something.

Here in the States we often don't know what to do with leeks. We buy them to make potato-leek soup but that's about the extent of it. The average grocery store seems to reserve only the smallest amount of square footage for them—much less than it devotes to lettuce onions or Idaho potatoes. But in Brussels I noticed that everyone seems to have a leek or two in their grocery basket. The same goes for France where so far as I can tell even the most basic shopping list includes leeks potatoes and carrots. (Yes I am one of those types who stare compulsively at other people's grocery carts. Guilty as charged.)

Leeks look like oversize scallions and they are related to both onions and garlic but their taste is softer and more subtle than any of them. In a word they're delicious. I love leeks in nearly every form but I have to admit that I don't cook them as often as I could.

That has started to change though since I met my friend Olaiya Land. Olaiya spent four years living in Brussels, where she studied, taught English, and worked as a translator. She fell in love with the place—in fact, she's the reason that my husband and I went there. Though she now lives in Seattle and runs a small catering company, her kitchen is filled with remnants of Belgium: antique silver flatware, old platters, a collection of café au lait bowls bought at the flea market at the Place du Jeu de Balle. I've had my eye on the bowls since I first saw them, but my favorite of her Belgian finds is a recipe. It's a recipe for what I have come to call leek confit.

Essentially, leek confit is nothing more than leeks that have been sliced into thin rounds, chucked into a Dutch oven with a decent amount of butter, and left to cook under a tight lid for about half an hour. But with the help of moist heat, they become much more than that. They soften like loops of satin ribbon, and their oniony flavor gives way to something more delicate and sweet.

You could eat leek confit straight from the pot, but it is a little rich, and that's part of its charm. I like to fold it into scrambled eggs or an omelet—anything, really, that involves eggs. You could also use it as a bed for a piece of seared salmon, dab it onto flatbread, or spoon it into baked mushroom caps with some Parmesan. It's the kind of thing that tends to make itself very useful. I've been known to pull it out of the fridge to spruce up a ho-hum weeknight dinner of fried eggs and toast, and it's also handy when friends come over for a drink. As far as appetizers go, this one is almost instant: Slice a baguette, spread it with goat cheese, and pile warm confit on top. Ta-dah.

But Olaiya has found the best use for leek confit. She puts it in a regional Belgian dish called flamiche, or leek tart. The origins of flamiche are not without contention: Some say it hails from a town in southern Belgium called Dinant, while others claim that it is, in fact, French, from the Picardie region. But it particularly thrives in Dinant, where it is celebrated in an annual festival. There, it is primarily flavored with a pungent local cheese, but the more I read about flamiche, I find that every recipe is a little different. Most include leeks, but some also call for onions or bacon or ham. Some have a double crust, like an American apple pie, and though many include cheese or custard, others don't. Every Belgian family, Olaiya tells me, has its own way of making it.

Olaiya's version of flamiche is fairly classic. It's not unlike a leek quiche, really, but for added interest, she crumbles a bit of aged goat cheese into the confit before she pours in the custard. In general, leeks and goat cheese are a great pair—one of those matches made in heaven—but leeks and aged goat cheese are a particularly sultry duo. This tart is perfectly delicious with a standard fresh goat cheese, but with an aged one, it is, as Olaiya once confessed, "addictive." She buys aged Bûcheron, which is made in a large log shape and sold in thick slices. It has an enticingly moist, sticky texture and a flavor between tangy and smooth. Tucked into a mouthful of leek confit and custard, it is very, very fine. I would happily eat it for brunch, lunch, or dinner. Or all three.

But there are so many flamiches to love, and I don't plan to stop here. If every Belgian family has its own signature recipe, it's only fair, I figure, that I should have one, too.