

Grilled Cheese (Herb Croque-Monsieur)

Servings: 4

Source: Seattle Times

Ingredients

- 1½ tbsp each butter, flour
- ¾ cup whole milk
- ¼ cup cream cheese, softened
- 2 tsp finely chopped fresh chives or scallion tops
- ⅛ tsp each finely chopped or dried rosemary and thyme
- ⅛ tsp each salt and pepper
- 12 oz Gruyère, Comté, Fontina or Munster cheese, rind removed
- 8 slices hearty whole grain bread, ½ inch thick
- 12 oz thinly sliced ham
- 3 tbsps butter, melted
- whole grain mustard, optional
- small or sliced pickles, optional

Method

1. For the white sauce, put butter and flour into a small saucepan. Set over medium heat; stir until smooth and melted. Gradually whisk in milk until smooth. Cook, stirring constantly, until thickened, about two minutes. Remove from heat and stir in cream cheese, chives, herbs, salt and pepper. Let cool.
2. For the sandwiches, use the large holes on a four-sided grater to shred the cheese. Lay the 8 slices out on a work surface. Spread one side of each with about 1 tbsp of the sauce. Top 4 of the slices each with a quarter of the shredded cheese. Top each with a quarter of ham slices. Place a dressed slice of bread on top to make a sandwich. Smear the tops of the sandwiches with a little melted butter. Flip the whole sandwich and spread with more melted butter. Sandwiches can be assembled an hour or so in advance; cover tightly with plastic wrap.
3. Heat the oven to 200 degrees, and place a baking sheet in the oven. Heat a panini press or large nonstick griddle over medium heat until hot.
4. Spray the hot cooking surface, and add the sandwiches, working in batches as needed to accommodate your equipment. Cook until cheese is melty and bread is nicely golden and crisp, 5-6 minutes. Turn sandwiches so they cook evenly. Transfer the sandwiches to the baking sheet in the hot oven until ready to serve.
5. To serve, cut the sandwiches in half. Put onto heated serving plates. Accompany with a small dish of whole grain mustard and the pickles.

Notes

We added tomato slices inside the sandwiches, which was great.