



Croque Monsieur

Serves 4

Welcoming Spring with a classic toasted sandwich recipe perfect for any meal time!

TASTE OF SPRING FACT

There are not many dishes that can be served at either breakfast, lunch or dinner, but croque monsieur is definitely one!

This gourmet toasted sandwich is thought to have been created in 1901 at a brasserie on Boulevard Des Capucines in Paris by its owner, Michel Lunarca after he ran out of baguette for his sandwich of the day. Croque monsieur is often confused with croque madame, which is simply a croque monsieur topped with a fried sunny side-up or poached egg, making it a heartier sandwich, but not nearly as easy to eat.

INGREDIENTS

- 180ml Full Cream Milk
- 1 Bay Leaf
- 55gm Unsalted Butter - cut into a 2cm dice and warm to room temperature.
- 15gm Plain Flour
- 65gm Swiss Cheese - coarsely grate.
- 55gm Vintage Cheddar - coarsely grate.
- 5gm Vintage Cheddar - coarsely grate.
- To Taste - Finely Grated Nutmeg (optional)
- To Taste - Sea Salt and Finely Ground Black Pepper
- 8 slices Sourdough Bread
- 40gm Dijon Mustard
- 4 slices (60gm per slice) Double Smoked Ham
- As Required - Extra Virgin Olive Oil Spray

METHOD

1. Over a moderate heat, in a saucepan, add the milk and bay leaf. Bring it up to a gentle simmer, then remove the saucepan from the heat and stand for 10 minutes to allow the bay leaf's flavour to infuse. Remove and discard the bay leaf.
2. Over a moderate heat, in a second saucepan, add and melt the butter. Add the flour and 'cook out' for 2 minutes whilst stirring continuously. Gradually add the milk in small batches, incorporating it into the flour mixture with a wooden spoon. Then add the Swiss cheese and vintage Cheddar cheese. Mix until the cheeses have combined.
3. Bring the sauce up to the boil, reduce the heat to a very gentle simmer. Cook, stirring continuously for 2 minutes or until the sauce has thickened, there are no lumps and no flour flavour evident when the sauce is tasted. Season to taste with nutmeg (optional), sea salt and black pepper. Remove the saucepan from the heat, stand and allow the sauce to cool for 10 minutes.
4. On a clean work surface, lay out the 8 slices of sourdough bread. Evenly spread the facing side of each slice with Dijon mustard, then, on top of the Dijon mustard, evenly spread each slice with the cheese sauce.



5. Using only 4 of the bread slices, top the cheese sauce with a slice of ham (folding it if required).
6. Finally, place the remaining 4 slices of bread on top - cheese sauce side down - to finish making the sandwich. Lightly spray both sides of each sandwich with extra virgin olive oil spray.
7. Heat a sauté pan over a low heat. Once hot, pan fry the croque monsieur (in batches if required) until light golden brown on both sides and the cheese sauce is bubbling. Remove from the heat.

TO SERVE

Carefully cut each croque monsieur sandwich in half (they will be hot!) and arrange them on a plate, board or platter.