

Classic Paris Bistro Croque Monsieur for Alliance Francaise de DuPage

Yield : 2 sandwiches

Ingredients:

Béchamel Sauce

1 ounce unsalted butter (European style)

1/8 cup (2 TB) all-purpose flour

7 ounces hot whole milk

Good pinch ground nutmeg

Salt and pepper to taste

Method - Béchamel sauce

Melt butter in a medium saucepan over low/medium heat until foamy. Add flour and cook, stirring, until mixture is pale and foamy, about 3 minutes. Gradually add hot milk, stirring with a whisk until mixture is smooth. Cook, stirring continuously, until sauce is thick and somewhat elastic, about 4 minutes. Remove from heat and add nutmeg, salt and pepper. Cool to a warm temperature before using.

Note: Béchamel can be made 1 day ahead. Let cool; press plastic wrap directly onto surface and chill.

Ingredients for the sandwiches:

4 slices ½" thick country-style bread, like crusty Italian

2 ounces ham (about 4 slices thinly sliced)

2 teaspoons Dijon Mustard (Edmond Fallot brand recommended)

1.5 ounces Gruyère cheese, grated (about 1/2 cup)

2 Tablespoons salted butter for greasing the pan under the bread (Beurre d'Isigny - Isigny Ste-Mère brand recommended)

Method – Assembling the Croque Monsieurs:

Preheat oven to 425°. Place the oven rack in the middle of the oven.

On a work surface, spread 1 bread slice with 1 teaspoon of Dijon mustard, and then about 1 heaping Tablespoon of the béchamel sauce, spreading evenly and extending all the way to the edges. Place 2 slices of ham on top. On the second piece of bread, spread 1 heaping Tablespoon of béchamel sauce and then flip the bread onto the ham, sauce side down.

Spread 1 more heaping Tablespoon of béchamel sauce on the top of the sandwich, gently spreading to the edges. Place the bread slices on a buttered baking sheet.

Top with about 1/4 cup grated cheese.

Repeat the process for the second sandwich.

Bake 15 minutes. If desired, place under a broiler for additional browning.

Note: Sandwiches can be made **(but not baked)** 1 day ahead. Cover with plastic wrap; chill until ready to cook.