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### **The Croque Monsieur**

Makes 4 sandwiches

Elevate your sandwich experience with our mouthwatering Croque Monsieur! Layers of savory ham, creamy béchamel sauce, and gooey melted cheese are sandwiched between perfectly toasted slices bread. It's a taste of Paris in every bite. Bon appétit!

#### ***Sandwich Ingredients:***

2 tablespoons butter  
8 slices brioche bread  
Dijon mustard  
Béchamel sauce  
8 slices ham, thinly sliced  
3 cups grated cheese  
(we like using a mixture of Gruyère,  
Parmesan, and sharp white cheddar)

#### ***Bechamel Sauce Ingredients:***

3 tablespoons butter  
3 tablespoons flour  
2 cups milk  
1 bay leaf  
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg  
1/2 cup Parmesan, grated  
1 tsp Kosher salt  
1/4 teaspoon pepper

#### ***Directions:***

1. Make the Béchamel sauce. In a small saucepan over medium-high heat, melt 3 tablespoons of butter until bubbly. Add 3 tablespoons of flour and whisk vigorously together. While continuously stirring, allow the roux to cook for 2 minutes to allow the flavors to develop. Slowly, add the milk while continuing to whisk. Add the bay leaf and nutmeg. Whisk the sauce until smooth and thickened, then slowly add the Parmesan cheese. Stir until the cheese is melted and the sauce is smooth. Season the sauce with salt and pepper, to taste.
2. Prep the sandwich. Slice the bread, and lightly butter the outside of each slice. Spread a thin layer of Dijon mustard and a layer of the Béchamel sauce on four of the bread slices. Place 2 slices of ham on top of the Béchamel sauce and sprinkle with half the grated cheese. Top each stack with a second slice of bread.
3. Grill the sandwich. Using a panini press or a skillet, grill the sandwiches until golden brown on both sides.
4. Broil the cheese. Add another layer of Béchamel sauce to top of each grilled sandwich. Sprinkle with the remaining grated cheese and broil using the panini press or in the oven until the cheese is bubbly and browned.
5. Enjoy!

***Variation:*** The counterpart to the “Croque Monsieur” is the “Croque Madame.” The latter is the same sandwich with the addition of a fried egg on top which is said to be reminiscent of a lady’s hat. Cook the egg sunny side up taking care not to overcook. Sprinkle with salt and serve immediately on top of the assembled sandwich.