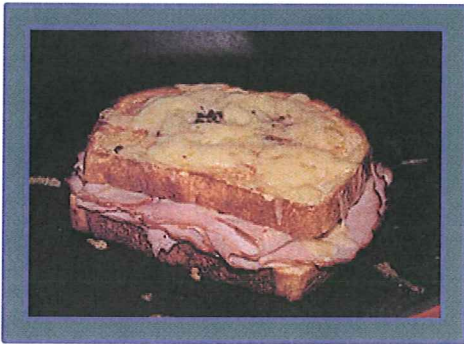




Grandpa Hicks' Recipe of the Week

Croque Monsieur



The Croque Monsieur, or "Crispy Mister," appeared on Parisian café menus in 1910. The original Croque Monsieur was simply a hot ham and Gruyere cheese sandwich, fried in butter. Some believe it was accidentally created when French workers left their lunch pails by a hot radiator and came back later to discover the cheese in their sandwiches had melted and the bread had crisped.

Ingredients

2 tbsp. unsalted butter
2 1/2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
1 cup whole milk
pinch of ground nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste
1/2 bay leaf

6 slices firm white , whole wheat or sourdough bread
6 (or more) slices Black Forest ham
1/2 lb. grated gruyere
Mustard
(traditionally Dijon but hot, sweet mustards work well, too)

Directions

Melt the butter over low heat in a small saucepan and add the flour all at once. Stir with a whisk for 2 minutes. Slowly whisk in milk, then add nutmeg and bay leaf. Increase heat to medium-high and boil, whisking constantly, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat, add salt and pepper, and whisk in 1/2 cup gruyere. Remove bay leaf and set aside.

Preheat oven to 350. Lightly butter bread slices and lay on baking sheet. Toast for 2 minutes. Turn bread over and toast for an additional 2 minutes. Remove baking sheet from oven and preheat broiler on high.

On baking sheet, lightly brush all bread slices with mustard. Top 3 slices of bread with ham slices and top with about 1/8 cup gruyere. Place other bread on top to make sandwich. Spoon cheese sauce on top of the sandwiches (don't be shy!). Sprinkle remaining grated gruyere on top of sauce. Place baking sheet in oven and broil until cheese on top bubbles and begins to brown slightly, about 2-4 minutes.

Featuring Our Own Imported Swiss Gruyere

Gruyere is a creamy, pale cheese with small holes and a slightly granular texture. The flavor is rich, somewhat nutty and slightly salty, because it is a brined cheese. Because gruyere has a distinctive but not overpowering flavor, it is an excellent addition to quiches, soups, salads, and pastas. Gruyere can be sliced or grated depending on the desired effect.

