Croque Monsieur (and Croque Madame)

Quick · Serves 4

Ken's note: TBD

A baked ham and Gruyère sandwich with béchamel on top, toasted until golden. Add a fried egg and it becomes a Croque Madame.

Ingredients

Béchamel

- ¼ cup (½ stick) unsalted butter
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups whole milk
- ¼ tsp Dijon mustard
- Pinch of nutmeg
- Salt and black pepper

Sandwiches

- 8 slices white sandwich bread, pain de mie, or brioche (about ¾ inch thick)
- 2 Tbsp softened butter
- 8 slices good ham (about 5 oz)
- 6 oz Gruyère or Comté, grated (about 2½ cups)
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan
- 4 eggs, for Madame

Method

1. Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat, whisk in the flour, and cook 3 minutes. Gradually whisk in the milk until smooth. Cook, stirring, until it coats the back of a spoon, 5–7 minutes. Off the heat, whisk in the mustard, nutmeg, salt, and pepper.
2. Heat the oven to 400°F and line a sheet pan with parchment. Lightly toast the bread if you like and butter one side of each slice. Set 4 slices butter-side up on the pan. Spread each with béchamel to the edges, then add 2 slices of ham and a good sprinkle of Gruyère. Top with the other 4 slices, butter-side up. Spread more béchamel on top and sprinkle with the remaining Gruyère and the Parmesan.
3. Bake 10–15 minutes, until toasted, bubbly, and golden. Broil 1–2 minutes if you want more color, watching closely. Rest 1–2 minutes, then cut in half diagonally.
4. **Croque Madame:** fry an egg for each sandwich, sunny side up or over easy, and set it on top of each finished sandwich. The yolk makes a sauce.

Notes

Make ahead. assemble uncooked, cover, and refrigerate up to 24 hours before baking. Reheat cooked sandwiches at 350°F for 8–10 minutes.