

Mini Croque Monsieur

An Entertaining Staple

What is the go-to appetizer is for many of the best caterers? Le Croque Monsieur. Actually, the mini croque monsieur is a popular classic that fills the bill, because it's easy on the budget, simple to assemble and will feed a small army. It's also visually tempting and tasty. We asked New York City caterer, Diane Gordon, to share her recipe. "I love this particular version, because we use quality ingredients that are easily accessible and it can be whipped up at a moment's notice." It's also adaptable. While Diane prefers to use a rustic country ham, deli-style black forest is fine, too. Either way, it's simply delicious!

Mini Croque Monsieus

Yield: 32 pieces

Bechamel Sauce

2tbsp butter
3tbsp flour
2 cups of whole milk, warmed over low heat
½ cup grated Jarlsberg cheese
pinch of nutmeg
salt and pepper

For Sandwiches

16 slices brioche or white bread, crusts trimmed
¼ cup Dijon mustard
16 slices French ham (or Black Forest)
8 slices Jarlsberg cheese
½ stick butter, melted
2 cups bechamel sauce

½ cup Jarlsberg cheese, grated

For the sauce

Over low heat, melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the flour and stir for about one minute. Slowly pour in warmed milk and cook whisking constantly until the sauce thickens. Add the grated cheese off the heat and stir until it melts. Season with the nutmeg and salt and pepper to taste. Set the sauce aside.

Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Brush one side of eight bread slices with Dijon mustard. Place ham slice on top, cover with bechamel sauce, add second ham slice and one slice of Jarlsberg cheese. Finish with slice of bread; gently press on each sandwich.

Brush both sides of the sandwiches with the melted butter. Heat a non-stick pan and saute sandwiches over medium flame until golden brown on both sides. Transfer sandwiches to a parchment lined baking sheet. Cut each sandwich into quarters and top each quarter with bechamel sauce (save any extra for another use). Sprinkle grated cheese on top and place the baking sheet in oven. Bake 4-5mins until the cheese turns golden - be careful not to let the cheese burn.

Recipe Courtesy: Diane Gordon Catering, NYC

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