

Cooking With Rania

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Croque Madame

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- Sea salt to taste
- Cayenne pepper to taste
- Pinch nutmeg
- 3 cups grated Gruyere
- 8 slices hearty white sandwich sliced about ½ inch thick
- Dijon mustard
- 1 pound baked Virginia ham, sliced thin

- 4 eggs
- Additional butter for frying the eggs
- Chopped chive for garnish

DIRECTIONS

In a small saucepan over medium heat, bring the milk and bay leaves to a simmer, set aside off of the heat.

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt the 2 tablespoons of the butter and add the flour all at once, whisking for 1 minute, until you have a roux. Slowly pour the hot milk into the butter–flour mixture and cook, whisking constantly, until the sauce is thickened. Off the heat add the salt, pepper, nutmeg, 1 cup grated Gruyere and set aside.

Spread each of 4 bread slices with butter and place them on a work surface, buttered sides down. Spread the slices with the Dijon mustard and sprinkle each slice with about 3 tablespoons of the grated cheese. Top each piece with about 4 – 5 slices of ham and sprinkle another 3 tablespoons or so of the remaining grated cheese over the ham. Spread each of the remaining 4 slices of bread slices on one side with butter and then place them on the sandwiches, buttered side up.

In a very large cast iron skillet over medium heat or in an electric frying pan, cook the sandwiches until golden brown and crisp on both sides, about 4 minutes on the first side and 3 minutes on the second side. Transfer them to a baking sheet and top each sandwich with a ¼ cup of the sauce and broil until slightly browned.

While the sandwiches are broiling, fry the eggs, sunny-side up, leaving the yolks soft.

Place the sandwiches on each of four serving plates and top each sandwich with the fried egg. Sprinkle with chives and serve at once. Serve hot.

Serves: 4 to 8 servings