

Mini Croque Monsieur—An Excellent Party Nibble



Photo courtesy: bakedbree.com.

The next big thing in appetizers is this mini croque monsieur.

(NAPSA)—What is the go-to appetizer for many top caterers? It's mini croque monsieur! That's because it's budget friendly, will feed a small army, is simple to assemble and is visually tempting. Says leading New York City caterer Diane Gordon, of Diane Gordon Catering, "I love this version, because we use easily accessible, quality ingredients and it can be whipped up almost instantly."

Mini Croque Monsieurs

Yield: 32 pieces

Béchamel Sauce:

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

For Sandwiches:

- 16 slices brioche or white bread
- ¼ cup Dijon mustard
- 16 slices French ham (or Black Forest)
- 8 slices Jarlsberg cheese
- ½ stick butter, melted
- 2 cups béchamel sauce (recipe below)
- ½ cup Jarlsberg cheese, grated

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. For the béchamel sauce, melt butter in a sauce pan. Add flour and stir for about one minute. Slowly pour in the milk and cook, whisking constantly until sauce thickens. Take off heat and add grated cheese, stirring until it melts. Season with nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste. Set sauce aside. Brush one side of eight bread slices with Dijon mustard. Place one ham slice over mustard, cover with sauce. Add second ham slice and one slice of cheese. Finish with bread slice, then gently press on each sandwich. Brush both sides of sandwiches with melted butter. Heat a nonstick pan over medium flame and sauté sandwiches until golden brown, both sides. Transfer sandwiches to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Cover tops with sauce, saving any extra for another use. Sprinkle with grated Jarlsberg. Place in oven and bake 4–5 minutes, until cheese turns golden—do not let cheese burn. With serrated knife, trim crusts from sandwiches and then cut each into four squares. Serve immediately.

Find more easy entertaining ideas at www.jarlsbergusa.com.