



Comté Cheese Soufflé

Comté is my home, my village, my county; it gives me a sense of place. Maman Blanc would not cook her soufflé in individual soufflé moulds, but in a large shallow earthenware dish. She would place the dish on the table for all of us to help ourselves. Sometimes the soufflé mixture would fill a flaky pastry tart. Of course, only Comté would be used, never Gruyère or Emmenthal, but you can if you like!

SERVES (YIELD): 6
 DIFFICULTY RATING: ••
 PREPARATION TIME: 20 MINS
 COOKING TIME: 30 MINS

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:

1 x 25-30cm earthenware oval dish, electric whisking machine, pastry brush.

PLANNING AHEAD:

The soufflé base (without the egg whites) can be made a day in advance, covered with buttered paper or cling film to prevent crusting.

INGREDIENTS

For the soufflé base

50g unsalted butter
 50g plain flour
 450ml whole milk
 3 egg yolks
 160g Comté cheese grated
 12g Dijon mustard
 2g/2 pinches sea salt (*1)
 1g/2 pinches white pepper
 20g of Comté cheese, grated finely

To line the soufflé dish

20g unsalted butter, softened
 20g breadcrumbs, dry

For the soufflé mix

7 medium egg whites
 Juice of 1/4 lemon
 1g/1 pinch sea salt

For the sauce

150ml double cream
 70g Comté cheese, grated
 4 grinds white pepper
 Spoonful of Kirsch (optional)

VARIATIONS

The list of different cheeses to use for soufflés is endless; goats' cheese, stinking bishop, stilton and gruyère are just a few.

METHOD

Preparing the soufflé base

- 1 Pre-heat the oven to 175°C. Place a baking tray on the middle shelf in the oven.
- 2 On a medium heat in a small saucepan, melt the butter, add the flour and whisk until a smooth consistency; cook the roux to a blonde colour.
- 3 Gradually add the milk little by little, whisking it to a smooth consistency. Lower the heat, add the cheese and mustard, and continue to cook, stirring from time to time for 3-5 minutes.
- 4 Remove from the heat and allow to cool a little. Add the egg yolks and stir until the mixture is consistent. Keep warm.

Lining the soufflé dish

- 1 Line the earthenware soufflé dish with melted butter and the dried breadcrumbs, reserve.

Whisking the egg whites

- 1 In a mixing bowl add the lemon juice and salt to the egg white and whisk until very soft peaks are formed, then continue whisking until you have firm peaks.

Making the soufflé mix and filling the dish

- 1 For the soufflé mixture, in a large mixing bowl place the warm soufflé base and whisk in briskly 1/3 of the whipped egg whites to lighten the base.
- 2 Then, carefully fold in the remaining egg whites; delicately cut and lift the mix to ensure there is a minimum loss of volume and lightness.
- 3 Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary.
- 4 Pour the soufflé mixture into the dish, smooth the top with a long palette knife and push the soufflé mixture away from the side of the dish by sliding your thumb around the edge.

Cooking the soufflé

- 1 Cook in the pre-heated oven for 20 minutes
- 2 Sprinkle the cheese on top of the soufflé and cook for a further 5 minutes.
- 3 Remove from the oven and serve immediately.

Making the sauce

- 1 Whilst the soufflé is cooking (optional) bring the cream to the boil and add the cheese and pepper, stirring continually. Once the cheese has melted, remove from the heat, taste. Pour the sauce into a separate sauce boat and serve with the soufflé.