

Make-Ahead Cheese Soufflés

SERVES Serves 6

TIME 1¾ hours, plus 1 hour chilling

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

Wouldn't it be nice to produce a batch of rich, cheesy soufflés without having to arrange your schedule around them? With this recipe, it's easily achieved. We began with a standard béchamel sauce and then added plenty of nutty Comté, which we supplemented with Parmesan to add extra-cheesy oomph without a lot of moisture that might otherwise cause the soufflé to collapse. After folding in egg whites that had been whipped to stiff peaks, we portioned the mixture into individual ramekins, which we baked in a water bath until the structure was softly set. The water bath ensured that the soufflés cooked evenly from edge to edge instead of becoming dry and stiff on the sides. When they were cool, we removed them from their ramekins and refrigerated them on a baking sheet. Just before serving, we transferred the baking sheet to a hot oven, where the soufflés puffed and crisped.



INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon table salt
- Pinch ground nutmeg
- 1 cup milk, divided
- 3 ounces Comté cheese, shredded (¾ cup)

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

* You'll need six 4-ounce ramekins for this recipe. Greasing the ramekins generously ensures that the soufflés emerge cleanly. Sharp cheddar, Gruyère, or gouda can be substituted for the Comté. The cooled soufflés can be frozen for up to two weeks before the second bake; thaw them at room temperature before baking. Serve the soufflés with Pickled Mustard Seeds and lightly dressed salad greens, if desired.

- 1 ounce
Parmesan cheese,
grated (1/2 cup)
- 3 large eggs, separated
- 2 teaspoons minced
fresh parsley
- 1/4 teaspoon cream of
tartar

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Generously spray six 4-ounce ramekins with vegetable oil spray.

2 Melt butter in medium saucepan over medium heat. Stir in flour, salt, and nutmeg and cook for 1 minute. Add half of milk and whisk until smooth. Whisk in remaining milk and cook, whisking constantly, until mixture is thickened and bubbling, about 2 minutes. Off heat, whisk in Comté and Parmesan until melted and smooth (mixture will be thick). Transfer to large bowl and whisk in egg yolks and parsley.

3 Using stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment, whip egg whites and cream of tartar on medium-low speed until foamy, about 1 minute. Increase speed to medium-high and whip until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Gently whisk one-third of whites into cheese mixture. Using rubber spatula, gently fold in remaining whites.

4 Distribute mixture evenly among prepared ramekins and smooth tops. Transfer ramekins to 13 by 9-inch baking pan and add boiling water until it comes halfway up sides of ramekins. Bake until soufflés are puffed and register 170 to 175 degrees, 14 to 17 minutes. Using tongs, transfer ramekins to wire rack and let cool completely, 30 to 40 minutes (soufflés will shrink). While soufflés cool, line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and grease parchment lightly.

5 Invert 1 ramekin onto your hand and shake sharply until soufflé releases. Reinvert soufflé onto prepared sheet. Repeat with remaining soufflés. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 3 days.

6 Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Bake soufflés until puffed and deeply browned, 15 to 18 minutes. While soufflés bake, set out 6 plates. Using thin spatula, transfer 1 soufflé to each plate. Serve immediately.