**Croque Monsieur Savory Bread Pudding Recipe**

Is there anything in the world better than a classic ham and cheese sandwich? Well, if there ever was a contender, it'd be this recipe for Croque Monsieur Savory Bread Pudding.

You see this recipe is a twist on the delicious classic French recipe croque monsieur but it's turned into casserole form. Yes, yes, for the semantics expert, a savory bread pudding is known as strata. But we say call it whatever the heck you want to call it because it all translates to delicious.

Ingredients

1 tablespoon unsalted butter plus extra for coating pan

1 yellow onion roughly chopped (about 1 1/2 cups)

4 garlic cloves thinly sliced

1 tablespoon roughly chopped fresh thyme leaves plus one teaspoon for garnish

8 large eggs

1 1/2 cups half-and-half

2 tablespoons Dijon Mustard

1/2 teaspoon hot sauce plus more for garnish

1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt divided

1 pound loaf French bread stale or toasted, cut into 1-inch dice

2 cups shredded Gruyere cheese (about 4.5 ounces)

1 pound Canadian Bacon cut into 1/2-inch dice

1/4 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese (about 1 ounce)

Instructions

* Saute The Onions: Coat a 2-quart (about 11-by-7-inch) baking dish with butter and set aside. Place a large frying pan over medium heat and add butter. When it foams, add onion, season with salt, stir, and cook until just softened, about 3 to 4 minutes.
* Add garlic, season with salt and pepper, and cook until beginning to soften and fragrant, about 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in thyme.
* Make The Bread Pudding Custard: Whisk eggs, half-and-half, mustard, hot sauce, and salt in a large bowl until evenly combined. Arrange half of the bread in bottom of prepared dish. Sprinkle with 1 cup of the Gruyere and half each of onion mix and ham.
* Repeat layering with remaining bread, onion mixture, ham, and Gruyere cheese. Pour egg mixture over top.
* Push to ensure bread is submerged in egg custard, cover with plastic wrap, put a plate and a 1-pound weight on top (a large can of tomatoes or rice in a re-sealable plastic bag works well), place in refrigerator for 3 to 12 hours.
* Bake The Bread Pudding: When ready to bake, heat oven to 325°F and arrange rack in the middle. Let strata sit at room temperature while oven heats, at least 20 minutes.
* Bake for 20 minutes, then increase temperature to 375°F. Sprinkle parmesan over the strata and bake for another 15 to 20 minutes until puffed and edges pull away slightly. Remove from oven and sprinkle over remaining thyme.
* Cool for at least 5 minutes before serving. Serve with hot sauce on the side.

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