

OVERALL time: 60 mins

CROQUE MONSIEUR TOASTIE BAKE WITH OVEN-ROAST VINE TOMATOES

As autumn slowly slides into winter, warming cling-to-your-ribs comfort food is what we crave more and more. 'Mom food' if you will, with a twist – like this Croque Monsieur toastie bake. We took inspiration from that ultimate classic French toasted ham and cheese treat and married it with mom's savoury bread and butter pudding. It's rich in all the right ways and to complement it, we contrast it with the tartness of oven-roasted vine tomatoes.

Metric

Number of servings : 4

ingredients

For the main

- 30 ml Butter
- 30 ml Flour
- 355 ml Milk, warmed
- 180 g Grated extra mature cheddar cheese
- 10 ml **Cape Herb and Spice Veggie Sprinkle Shaker**
- 5 ml **Cape Herb and Spice Atlantic Sea Salt**
- 2.5 ml **Cape Herb and Spice Extra Bold Black Pepper**
- Large loaf of sourdough bread (a loaf a day or two old is perfect for this bake)
- 10 Slices Gypsy ham
- 250 ml Fresh Cream
- 2 Jumbo free range eggs
- 60 g Grated pecorino or parmesan cheese

THIS IS WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO DO

PREP TIME: 30 mins | COOKING TIME: 30 mins

Melt the butter in a large saucepan. Add the flour and stir until combined. Slowly add the warm milk, whisking with a large balloon whisk. Continue cooking over low heat, whisking all the while

until the sauce is thick. Remove from heat and stir in one cup of the cheddar cheese. Add the **Cape Herb & Spice Veggie Sprinkle** as well as salt and pepper. Allow the sauce to cool to room temperature and then stir in the remaining cup of cheddar cheese.

Slice the sourdough in 1cm thick slices. Cut each slice in half. Spread the thick cheese sauce mixture on one half of the bread and top with half a slice of Gypsy ham. Cover the other half slice of bread with cheese spread as well and sandwich them together. Continue doing the same with the rest of the slices, then pack them tightly into a square or rectangular baking dish. Whisk together the cream and eggs and pour this mixture over the bread. Grate over the pecorino or parmesan and bake in a pre-heated 180 degree Celsius oven for 30 minutes.

The vine tomatoes can be roasted at the same time. Simply place a punnet of baby tomatoes on the vine in a shallow roasting dish, pour over a tablespoon of olive oil and place in the oven. NB: the tomatoes will only take 20 minutes to roast, so only put them in the oven ten minutes after the toastie bake has gone in. Serve piping hot.

<https://www.capeherb.co.za>
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