

Vegetarian Croque Monsieur

Ingredients (serves 4):

- **8 slices** of good-quality white or sourdough bread
- **2 tbsp** unsalted butter (plus more for spreading)
- **2 tbsp** all-purpose flour
- **1½ cups (360 ml)** whole milk
- **2 tsp** Dijon mustard
- **Salt & black pepper**, to taste
- **1 cup (100g)** grated Gruyère cheese (plus more for topping)
- **5–6** mushrooms, thinly sliced
- **2** medium tomatoes, thinly sliced and seeds removed
- **2 tbsp** olive oil
- **1 tsp** thyme (dried or fresh)



Instructions (Oven-Baked Method)

1. Preheat Oven:

- Preheat oven to **200°C / 400°F**.
- Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Make the Mornay Sauce:

- In a saucepan, melt **2 tbsp butter** over medium heat.
- Stir in **2 tbsp flour**, cook for 1 minute.
- Gradually whisk in **1½ cups milk** until smooth and thickened (2–3 min).
- Add **Dijon mustard, salt, pepper**, and **¾ cup Gruyère**.
- Stir until melted. Remove from heat.

3. Prepare Mushrooms:

- Sauté **sliced mushrooms** in **olive oil** with **thyme**, salt, and pepper until golden (5–7 minutes). Set aside.

4. Toast Bread (optional but recommended):

- Lightly toast all 8 bread slices in the oven for 5 minutes to help them hold up better.

5. Assemble the Sandwiches:

- On **4 slices**, spread a little Mornay sauce.
- Layer with sautéed mushrooms, tomato slices, and a sprinkle of Gruyère.
- Top with the other 4 slices of bread.
- Place all sandwiches on the prepared baking sheet.

6. Top & Bake:

- Spread the remaining Mornay sauce generously on top of each sandwich.
- Sprinkle with **more Gruyère** on top (around ¼ cup total).
- Bake in the oven for **15–18 minutes**, until cheese is bubbly and golden.