Breakfast / France

Cheese Soufflé

A trembling column of Gruyère and Parmesan that rises from its ramekin like a crown — its crust cracks to reveal a molten, eggy interior threaded with nutmeg and sharp cheese.

Time 60 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 30 g Unsalted butter (plus extra for greasing)
- ☐ 25 g All-purpose flour
- ☐ 200 g Whole milk (warm)
- ☐ 80 g Gruyère (finely grated)
- ☐ 20 g Parmesan (finely grated, plus extra for dusting)
- ☐ 4 g Egg yolks (large)
- ☐ 5 g Egg whites (large, at room temperature)
- ☐ 4 g Fine sea salt
- ☐ 1 g Freshly grated nutmeg
- ☐ 0.5 g Cayenne pepper (pinch)

Let's make it.

01 Preheat oven to 190 C (375 F) with a rack in the lower third. Generously butter four 200 ml ramekins, coating the sides with upward strokes. Dust the interior of each with finely grated Parmesan, tilting and tapping to coat evenly, then knock out any excess. Place on a baking sheet and refrigerate until the base is ready — cold walls help the soufflé grip and climb.

02 Melt butter in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add flour all at once and stir vigorously for 90 seconds until the roux smells of cooked pastry but is still pale. Pull the pan from heat and pour in the warm milk in one steady stream, whisking constantly to prevent lumps. Return to medium heat and whisk until the béchamel thickens to a stiff, glossy paste — it should pull away from the pan walls. Remove from heat. Beat in the egg yolks one at a time, then fold in both cheeses, salt, nutmeg, and cayenne. Cover the surface with plastic wrap and keep warm.

03 Ensure the bowl and whisk are perfectly clean and grease-free. Add a tiny pinch of salt to the egg whites. Whip on medium speed until foamy, then increase to high and whip until stiff, glossy peaks form. The whites should hold their shape firmly when the whisk is inverted but the very tips may curl ever so slightly — this is perfect. Do not whip to dry, dull peaks.

04 Stir a large spoonful (about one-quarter) of the stiff whites vigorously into the warm cheese base to lighten it. This sacrificial spoonful opens the texture. Using a wide spatula, gently fold the remaining whites into the base in three additions: cut down through the center, sweep along the bottom, and roll up the sides, rotating the bowl a quarter turn after each stroke. Stop the instant no white streaks remain. Every unnecessary fold costs lift.

05 Fill each prepared ramekin to within 1 cm of the rim. Run your thumb around the inside lip of each ramekin to create a shallow groove — this guides the soufflé to rise straight up rather than mushrooming to one side. Bake at 190 C (375 F) for 12–14 minutes without opening the oven door. Serve immediately the moment they come out — a soufflé waits for no one.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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