

Ultimate cheese & ham toastie

As the name suggests this is the ultimate of cheese toasties. You can use good quality butcher's ham or try my cola & black treacle ham recipe. It's worth it.

You can also serve it open with a fried egg on the top.



Ingredients (serves 4)

8 slices of sour dough bread

4 slices of ham

150g sliced mature cheddar

Worcestershire sauce

Salted butter

Rapeseed oil

For the cheese sauce

25g unsalted butter

25g plain flour

300ml chicken stock

50g grated mature cheddar

½ tsp English mustard

salt and ground white pepper to taste

Method

Preheat the oven to 170C full fan and line a baking tray with baking parchment.

Start by making the cheese sauce:

Melt the butter in a small saucepan over a low heat. Stir in the flour to form a roux and continue to cook for a minute while stirring with a wooden spoon.

Add the warm chicken stock a little at a time while stirring. Add the stock slowly and stir vigorously so you don't get any lumps in the sauce.

Keep on a low heat for about ten minutes to cook out the flour but keep stirring so the bottom of the pan doesn't catch.

Remove from the heat, mix in the grated cheddar, mustard and season with the salt and white pepper to taste. The sauce should be quite thick – almost like a paste.

Cover with a cartouche to prevent the sauce from forming a skin. Set aside.

Assemble the sandwiches:

Spread four slices of the sour dough bread with the cheese sauce, top with ham, then the sliced cheddar, a couple splashes of Worcestershire sauce and then top each sandwich with the remainder of the sour dough.

Heat a large frying pan over a medium heat with a splash of rapeseed oil and place the sandwiches in the pan no more than two at a time. If you overcrowd the pan the sandwiches won't colour well. As soon as the sandwiches start to sizzle add a generous knob of butter to the pan.

Pan fry for about a minute on either side or until golden in colour, then repeat for the remaining sandwiches.

Transfer the sandwiches to the lined baking tray and bake in the oven for around 5 minutes or until the cheese has melted.

Allow to rest for a minute, then slice in half and eat straight away.