

Prep Time: 10 Minutes
Cook Time: 20 Minutes
Total Time: 30 Minutes

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Ingredients

The Mushroom Filling:

- 8 oz (225g) Cremini or White Button Mushrooms: Sliced thickly. (Cremini offer a deeper flavor, but button works perfectly).
- 2 tbsp Unsalted Butter: Divided.
- 1 tbsp Olive Oil: To prevent the butter from burning.

- 2 Cloves Garlic: Minced finely.
- 1 tsp Fresh Thyme Leaves: Or ½ tsp dried thyme.
- Salt and Freshly Cracked Black Pepper: To taste.

The Sandwich:

- 2 Slices Artisan Bread: Sourdough or a hearty Italian loaf is best. It needs to be sturdy enough to hold the filling.
- 2 tbsp Mayonnaise: For the exterior. (Trust the process—mayo creates a better golden crust than butter).
- 1 tsp Dijon Mustard: For the interior.
- 3 oz (85g) Gruyère Cheese: Grated. (Swiss cheese works as a substitute). Gruyère melts beautifully and has a nutty, savory profile.
- 2 oz (55g) Mozzarella: Shredded. (For the stretch factor).
- 1 tbsp Grated Parmesan: For a crispy cheese skirt on the outside (optional but recommended).

Equipment

- Large skillet (preferably cast iron or non-stick).
- Spatula.
- Another heavy pan or a foil-wrapped brick (for pressing).

Instructions

Phase 1: The Mushroom Sauté (Time: 8-10 Minutes | Intensity: Medium)

1. **Prep the Pan:** Place a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of butter and the olive oil. Allow the butter to melt and foam.
2. **Sauté the Mushrooms:** Add the sliced mushrooms in a single layer. Do not crowd the pan; if you have a small pan, cook them in two batches. Let them sit undisturbed for 2-3 minutes. This allows them to brown.
3. **Stir and Release:** Stir the mushrooms. They will release a significant amount of liquid. Continue to cook over medium-high heat until this liquid evaporates completely. This is the most critical step. The mushrooms must be dry before they hit the bread.

4. Add Aromatics: Once the pan is dry and the mushrooms are golden brown, reduce heat to medium. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter, the minced garlic, and the thyme. Sauté for 60 seconds until fragrant.
5. Season and Cool: Season generously with salt and pepper. Remove the mushrooms from the pan and set them aside on a plate to cool slightly. Do not wash the pan; you will use it for the sandwich.

Phase 2: The Assembly (Time: 3 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Prepare the Bread: Lay the two slices of bread on a cutting board.
2. The Interior Flavors: Spread $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of Dijon mustard on the inside of each slice.
3. The Cheese Layer (Bottom): Sprinkle half of the grated Gruyère and Mozzarella mix onto one slice of bread.
4. The Mushroom Layer: Pile the sautéed mushrooms on top of the cheese. Ensure they are in an even layer.
5. The Cheese Layer (Top): Top the mushrooms with the remaining cheese. The cheese acts as glue on both sides.
6. Close the Sandwich: Place the second slice of bread on top, mustard side down. Press gently.

7. The Exterior Spread: Using a spatula or knife, spread 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise on the top exterior slice of the sandwich. Make sure to cover the entire surface, edge to edge.

Phase 3: The Grill & Press (Time: 8-10 Minutes | Intensity: Medium-Low)

1. Heat the Pan: Return your skillet to medium-low heat. This is key. If the heat is too high, the bread will burn before the cheese melts.
2. Place and Press: Place the sandwich in the pan, mayo side down. Now, spread the remaining 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise on the top slice (the side facing up).
3. The Weight: Place a heavy skillet (or a foil-wrapped brick) on top of the sandwich. Press down gently. This flattens the sandwich, ensuring the cheese and mushrooms make contact with the bread for maximum flavor transfer.
4. First Side: Cook for 4-5 minutes. Check the underside. You want a deep, golden brown crust. Adjust heat as necessary.
5. The Flip: Remove the weight. Use a spatula to carefully flip the sandwich. If you are using the optional Parmesan, sprinkle it around the edges of the pan now; it will crisp up into a “frico” skirt.
6. Second Side: Replace the weight and cook for another 3-4 minutes until the second side is golden brown and the cheese is visibly melting out the sides.

Phase 4: The Rest & Slice (Time: 2 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Rest: Remove the sandwich from the pan and place it on a wire rack or cutting board. Let it rest for 2 minutes. This allows the molten cheese to set slightly, preventing it from all running out when you cut it.
 2. Slice: Cut diagonally. Serve immediately.
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Recipe Notes & Variations

- The Bread: Avoid soft, fluffy white bread. It will disintegrate. You need structure.
- The Cheese: Feel free to experiment. Smoked Gouda, Fontina, or even Brie would be delicious here. The key is a mix of a melting cheese and a flavorful cheese.
- The Mushrooms: If you are short on time, you can use pre-sliced mushrooms, but you still must sauté them to remove the water.
- Vegan Option: Use a high-quality vegan butter and vegan cheese. Sauté the mushrooms in olive oil. Note that vegan cheese often takes longer to melt, so keep the heat low and the press on.

Nutrition Information

Disclaimer: Nutritional information is an estimate and will vary based on the specific brands of ingredients used and the size of your bread slices.

- Serving Size: 1 Sandwich

- Calories: 720

- Total Fat: 48g

- Saturated Fat: 22g

- Trans Fat: 0g

- Cholesterol: 95mg

- Sodium: 980mg

- Total Carbohydrates: 42g

- Dietary Fiber: 4g

- Sugars: 5g

- Protein: 28g
- Vitamin D: 10% DV
- Calcium: 45% DV
- Iron: 15% DV
- Potassium: 12% DV