

The Perfect Grilled Cheese

June 2, 2020 | CHEF VEE, COOKING SCHOOL HEAD CHEF



Who doesn't love grilled cheese? But how about a grilled ham and cheese? And with the perfect cup of tomato soup? But it has to be just right. I have a little trick for making the perfect toasted delight.

Grilled Ham and Cheese

Cook time: 20 minutes/ Serves 1

- 2 slices of your favorite sliced bread
- 4 slices muenster cheese
- 3 or 4 slices of deli sliced ham
- Mayonnaise for spreading

Tomato Soup

Cook time: 20 min/Serves 3

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- Fresh parsley
- 1 large sweet onion, finely chopped
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced
- 6 sprigs fresh basil
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 56 ounces canned crushed tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

For the grilled cheese: heat a skillet to medium low heat. We definitely want to go slow with the heat - otherwise you will burn your bread. While pan is warming, grab your favorite sliced bread. Start with cheese. Lay two pieces of cheese on one slice of bread. Next, layer with ham or your favorite deli meat. Add two more slices of cheese and then top off with bread. Now, here is how you get this crispy golden sandwich. Spread a very thin layer with mayonnaise. Yes, mayonnaise. Mayonnaise is made up of eggs and oil and makes a very crispy sandwich. Butter will do a good job but.... why settle for good when you can make great! Once you spread the mayo, place the sandwich on the hot skillet and rest in pan for about 4-5 minutes or until golden brown. Flip onto other side and then cover with lid or foil. This will help melt the cheese. Remember do not raise heat as it will burn bread and not allow the time for the cheese to melt.

While the cheese is melting and the bread is toasting, let's prep the tomato soup.

In a large nonreactive stock pot or Dutch oven, heat oil. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, about 6 minutes. Add garlic and continue to cook, stirring for another 2 minutes. Add basil and thyme and continue to stir to toast about 2 minutes, until fragrant. Add broth, crushed tomatoes, sugar, salt and

pepper. Bring to a simmer and stir to incorporate well. Cover, reduce heat to low, and continue to cook for at least 30 minutes. If you're okay with a thicker soup, skip the next step (pureeing), season to taste and enjoy! If you prefer a smooth/pureed soup, allow soup to cool slightly, and using a blender, or food processor carefully purée the soup in small batches of about 3-4 cups at a time, OR use an immersion blender to completely puree directly in the pot. (If using a blender or food processor be sure to vent/crack the lid to avoid steam building up.) Return pureed soup to the pot. Season to taste with additional salt and pepper if needed.

At this point your sandwich is ready and ready to slice! Enjoy alongside the soup and you will satisfy those stomachs for both lunch AND dinner!