

Cheese Soufflé

Adapted by Our Young Chefs from Cook's Illustrated, Jan/Feb, 2014
Makes 18 to 22 snack-size servings

Serve this soufflé with a green salad for a light dinner. Gruyère, Comté or gouda cheese can be substituted for the cheddar. To prevent the soufflé from overflowing the soufflé dish, leave at least 1 inch of space between the top of the batter and the rim of the dish.



INGREDIENTS

2 to 3 ounces Parmesan cheese,
grated (1 cup)

12 ounces sharp cheddar cheese,
shredded (3 cups)

Pam vegetable oil spray *OR*
vegetable oil
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Parmesan
cheese
(prepared
earlier)



4-ounce aluminum ramekin cups

2 tablespoons fresh parsley,
finely diced

12 large eggs, separated

DIRECTIONS

Prepare the Parmesan cheese for the recipe: Using the small holes on a box grater or microplane, shred/grate the **Parmesan cheese** to yield **1 cup**. Set aside; the **cheese** will be used in 3 different steps during the **soufflé** preparation, not all at one time.

Cheddar: Using the large holes on a box grater, shred the **cheddar cheese** to yield **3 cups**; set aside until needed later.

Prepare the aluminum ramekins: Adjust the oven rack to the middle position; heat the oven to 375°F. Spray 20 4-ounce aluminum cups with **vegetable oil spray** *OR* using a pastry brush *OR* paper towel, spread the inside bottom and sides of the cups with **oil**. Sprinkle the inside sides and bottom of each cup with **Parmesan cheese**. Place the prepared aluminum cups on one of 2 foil-lined baking sheet pans. Set aside until needed later.

Prep ingredients for the cheese sauce: Rinse 8 to 10 sprigs of **fresh parsley** under cool running water; pat dry with a kitchen or paper towel. Remove the **leaves**, finely dice to yield **2 tablespoons**. Set aside; the **diced parsley** will be used in 2 different steps during the soufflé preparation, not all at one time.

Separate the eggs: Separate the **egg yolks** from the **egg whites**.* Place the **egg yolks** in a small bowl or liquid measuring cup. Place the **egg whites** in a *clean* mixing bowl or the *clean* bowl of a stand mixer. Set the **yolks** and **whites** aside separately until needed later. ➡

* Technique to Separate an Egg

Option 1: Crack the egg in half; when gently opening the egg, cradle the yolk in one half of the shell. Empty the white from the half not holding the yolk into a bowl. Gently move/roll the yolk over to the empty shell, empty the egg white from the other eggshell half. Pour the yolk into a separate bowl.

Option 2: Crack the egg, open the egg shell over a cupped hand using fingers (held slightly apart) as a strainer to hold the yolk while the whites run into a bowl below. Place the yolk into a separate bowl.

Important Note: During the egg-separating process, take care not to get any amount of egg yolk mixed with the egg whites. Egg yolks contain fat and this will prevent the egg whites from mixing to a light volume for meringues and soufflés.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (2.5 ounces) all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon paprika
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon white pepper
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (4 ounces) unsalted butter
 $2\frac{2}{3}$ cups (21.8 ounces) whole milk
3 cups sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (*prepared earlier*)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup *plus* 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese (*prepared earlier*)
12 egg yolks (*prepared earlier*)
4 teaspoons fresh parsley, diced (*prepared earlier*)

Prepare the cheese sauce: In a mixing bowl, stir together the flour, paprika, salt, cayenne, white pepper and nutmeg. In a 3- to 4-quart saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Stir in the flour mixture; cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon or spatula. Slowly whisk in the milk; bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring constantly with a whisk (*be sure to scrape all over the bottom and edges/corner of the pan to prevent sticking*), until the mixture is thickened and smooth, about 1 minute.

Add the cheeses: Remove the pan from the heat; whisk in the cheddar and Parmesan cheeses, stirring until melted and smooth. Let cool for 10 minutes until close to room temperature. (*To speed up cooling the cheese sauce, set the pan in a bowl of cool or iced water; stir the sauce frequently.*)

Finish the sauce: When the sauce mixture is cool, whisk in the egg yolks and parsley.

12 egg whites (*prepared earlier*)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cream of tartar

Whip the egg whites: Using a stand mixer fit with a whisk attachment, whip the egg whites and cream of tartar on medium-low speed until foamy, about 1 minute. Increase the speed to medium-high; whip until stiff peaks form, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the cheese sauce mixture; continue to blend on low speed until fully combined, about 15 seconds.

GARNISH

2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese (*prepared earlier*)
2 teaspoons fresh parsley, diced (*prepared earlier*)

Bake the soufflés: Scoop the soufflé mixture into the prepared ramequin cups, leaving $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of space below the top rim. Sprinkle the tops of the cups with the remaining Parmesan. Bake at 375°F until the soufflés have risen above the rim, the tops are deep golden brown, and the interior registers 170°F \pm 15 to 18 minutes. Sprinkle the soufflés with the remaining parsley; serve immediately. ϕ

\ddagger The most foolproof way to test for doneness is with an instant-read thermometer, however, to check doneness without an instant-read thermometer, use two spoons to pry open the top of a soufflé to look inside. The soufflé inside should appear thick and creamy but not soupy.

ϕ A soufflé will fall/deflate when it has been out of the oven for about 5 minutes. It is a common misconception that a fallen soufflé cannot be restored to a risen state again. If the soufflé is still fairly warm (it has only been out of the oven less than 30 minutes or so) return it to the heated, 350°F oven briefly. The oven heat will convert the moisture in the soufflé into steam to reinflate it, though it will not be quite the original height -- it will lose about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the original height.



Fallen soufflé



Reinflated soufflé