

ROASTED LEEK & GRUYERE CROISSANTS

Yield: 6 croissants

This savory twist on the classic croissant combines sweet, caramelized leeks with sharp, nutty Gruyere cheese. Served for breakfast, lunch, or dinner, this makes for a hearty meal. Be sure to thoroughly clean your leeks before cooking to remove any dirt or sand trapped between the leaves.

1/2 quantity (about 1 1/2 pounds) croissant dough
2 tablespoons (1 ounce) unsalted butter
3 large leeks, white and light green parts only, outer leaves removed, washed, dried, and halved
2 cups low-sodium vegetable stock
1 fresh thyme sprig
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 tablespoon whole milk or cream
1 egg
1/4 pound Gruyere cheese, grated
1 tablespoon fresh chives, thinly sliced

Leek Fondue:

2 tablespoons (1 ounce) unsalted butter
1 leek, white and light green parts only, washed, dried, and thinly sliced
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
1 egg yolk
1 tablespoon heavy cream
1 tablespoon fresh thyme

- 1. To caramelize the leeks:** To a large cast iron skillet or sauté pan set over medium heat, add butter. Once foaming subsides, add halved leeks, cut-side down, and cook undisturbed for 2-3 minutes, or until lightly browned and caramelized. Add vegetable stock, thyme, and salt and bring to a simmer, then reduce heat to low and cover. Cook until the tip of a knife pierces the thickest part of the leek with no resistance, about 12-15 minutes. Remove leeks from pan and place on a paper towel-lined plate to remove excess liquid. Place in the refrigerator to cool.
- 2. To prepare leek fondue:** To a small saucepan set over medium heat, add butter. Once melted, add leeks and salt and cook, stirring constantly, until leeks have softened; about 3-4 minutes. Turn the heat down to low and continue to cook until the leeks have released all their moisture and are almost jam-like in consistency; 20-25 minutes. Transfer leeks to a small bowl and set aside to cool.
- 3.** To a separate medium bowl, add cream cheese, egg yolk, and heavy cream and stir to combine. Add melted leeks and thyme and fold into the cream cheese mixture using a wooden spoon or silicone spatula. Season to taste with salt and pepper then place in the refrigerator to cool.
- 4. To prepare croissant dough:** Lightly flour a work surface and roll the dough into a 10" x 7" x 1/2" thick rectangle. Position the rectangle so the long edge is parallel to the edge of your work surface. Use a ruler and paring knife or pizza cutter to make marks along the bottom edge of the dough every 3 inches, dividing the dough into 3 equal portions with a bit of excess dough.
- 5. To cut the dough:** Line up your ruler with the first bottom mark (3 inches in from the left side of the dough) and cut along this line. Repeat with the remaining marks until you have three, 3-inch wide rectangle sections and a small piece of excess dough. Once cut, position each dough section so that one long edge is parallel to the edge of your work surface. Use a ruler and paring knife or pizza cutter to make marks along the bottom edge of each section every 3 inches, dividing each piece into 2 equal portions with a bit of excess dough. Line up your ruler with the first mark



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and cut along this line. Continue lining up and cutting along the marks until all the sections have been cut and you have six, 3" squares. You can use any "scrap" pieces to make baby croissants or simply sprinkle the surface with sugar and bake as a snack.

6. To shape the dough: Place the croissants on a parchment-lined baking sheet equally spaced apart from one another. Using the tip of a sharp knife, carefully score a 2 x 2" square into the center of each croissant and prick all over with a fork. Add a tablespoon of the leek fondue into the center of each croissant and spread in an even layer using the back of a spoon or an offset spatula, being careful not to spread the fondue across the scored border.

7. Remove the leeks from the refrigerator and cut into 1" pieces, peeling off any tough outer leaves and excluding the stem piece. Add 4 leek pieces, caramelized side up, on top of the leek fondue and lightly press to adhere. Loosely cover the croissants with plastic wrap and set aside in a cool, room temperature spot to rise until they are nearly doubled in size and look like they have taken a deep breath, 2 to 2 1/2 hours, depending on the warmth of the room. If you gently poke one, it should feel soft and marshmallow-like. Don't try to rush the rise by warming the croissants—you don't want the butter to melt.

8. To bake the croissants: Preheat the oven to 425°F and place a rack in the center. Chill the croissants in the freezer for 10 minutes or in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. This will firm the butter, creating a flakier texture. To a small bowl, add the egg and milk and whisk to combine until no streaks of egg are visible. Brush the top edges of the croissants with the egg wash, being careful not to let any of the egg drip down to the sides. Top each croissant with a teaspoon of the Gruyere cheese, focusing as close to the center of each croissant as possible. Place the baking sheet into the oven and immediately reduce the temperature to 400°F. Bake the croissants for 22 to 25 minutes, rotating the tray halfway through, until the croissants are a deep golden brown and the cheese is melted and slightly caramelized. Transfer the croissants to a rack to cool then top with chives before serving.