

## **Croque Monsieur aux Asperges**

*from In Our Grandmothers' Kitchens*

### *Ingredients:*

2 tablespoons sweet butter plus butter as needed for browning bread  
2 tablespoons flour  
1 cup warmed milk  
1/2 teaspoon paprika  
1 pinch salt  
4 slices of good bread (I used King Arthur Flour's pain de mie recipe.)  
Dijon mustard to taste  
2 slices of ham  
4 thin slices Gruyère  
4 pieces of cooked asparagus, cut to fit the bread  
1/4 cup shredded Gruyère

### *Instructions:*

Preheat the broiler.

In a saucepan over low heat melt the 2 tablespoons of butter. Whisk in the flour, and cook, whisking, for 2 minutes. Slowly whisk in the hot milk. Cook and whisk until the sauce thickens a bit, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the sauce from the heat, and stir in the paprika and salt. Set aside.

Begin assembling your sandwiches. Spread the slices of bread lightly with mustard. Top two of the slices with a slice of cheese, ham, asparagus, and another slice of cheese. Place the other slices of bread on top to make two full sandwiches.

In a frying pan melt a small amount of butter. Pop the sandwiches into the pan and lightly brown them, adding a little more butter if needed.

Put the sandwiches on a baking sheet. Top them with some of the sauce (you don't have to use it all; I just like to make sure I'll have enough!) and the shredded cheese. Broil them until they turn golden brown and bubbly.

Serves 2 decadently.