

Apple and Mustard Grilled Cheese Sandwiches

Pretty much anyone can make an acceptable grilled cheese sandwich. But with this technique, you'll have a perfect crispy-melty sandwich without a panini press (though if you do have one, by all means, use it). A number of different cheeses work equally well here, so feel free to experiment and see which one you like best.

Apple Notes: The point of this recipe is to be so easy that you can make it with whatever cheese and fruit you have on hand. However, a firm-tart apple (see page 30) goes best with the mustard and cheese in the sandwich.

Note: For best results, slice the apple on a mandoline to make the slices thin enough to soften in the time it takes to grill the sandwich.

Equipment: 10- to 12-inch, heavy-bottomed skillet; 8- to 10-inch heavy-bottomed skillet, preferably cast iron

Makes: *2 sandwiches* • **Active time:** *20 minutes* • **Total time:** *20 minutes*

1½ tablespoons (21 g) salted butter, at room temperature

4 slices sourdough bread

2 teaspoons whole-grain mustard

About ⅓ of a large firm-tart apple (about 3 ounces; see Apple Notes), unpeeled, cored, and sliced very thin (see Note)

4 ounces (about 115 g) sharp Cheddar, aged Gouda, Gruyère, or Havarti cheese, thinly sliced

- 1• Set the empty skillets over two stovetop burners, both at medium heat. Let them get hot. If using a panini press, set to 350°F (medium heat).
- 2• Meanwhile, butter one side of each bread slice, then lay the slices butter side down on your cutting board. Spread equal portions of mustard on two of the bread slices, then divide up the apple slices into two portions and lay on top of the mustard. Divide up the cheese slices and lay over the apples. Top the sandwiches with the remaining bread slices, buttered-side-up.
- 3• Lay the sandwiches in the large skillet. Cook until the bottom is browned, 3 to 4 minutes, then flip. Set the preheated medium-size skillet on top of the sandwiches so it functions as a press. If your skillet isn't very heavy, weigh it down with a water-filled kettle, a few large cans of tomatoes, etc. Cook until both sides are evenly

browned, about 2 minutes more. If using a panini press, lay the sandwiches in the press and bring down the cover. Cook the sandwiches until crisp and bubbling, 4 to 6 minutes.

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