

Grilled Cheese with Coppa & Red Onion Pancetta Jam

This isn't the grilled cheese of yore. One bite into the toasty bread, the crispy coppa, oozy cheese and that red onion pancetta jam, you'll know this classic is all grown up. Caramelized onions are one of God's gifts to the patient cook, and they're what impart umami goodness here. We start by slowly rendering our pancetta — with zen-like restraint — until it's crisp and surrenders its fatty goodness to the pan. Then the onions melt into the porkiness. A few ingredients later and you have a condiment with star power. To put it on grilled cheese is practically cheating, but do it anyway.

Ingredients

red onion pancetta jam

4 ounces pancetta, diced (about 1/3 inch pieces)

2 medium red onions, sliced thin (about 4 cups)

½ teaspoon fresh thyme leaves

¼ teaspoon kosher salt

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

¼ cup sherry vinegar

¼ cup dark brown sugar

¼ cup water

sandwich filling

4 slices rustic sourdough

4 ounces muenster or fontina cheese (about 6 slices)

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

2 ounces coppa (about 10 slices)

special equipment

large nonstick skillet

Directions

for the jam

Place pancetta in medium saucepan and turn heat to medium. Cook until most of the fat has rendered, about 10 minutes. Add the onions, thyme, salt and pepper, and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are soft and golden, about 15 minutes. Add sherry vinegar, brown sugar and water and continue stirring occasionally until liquid evaporates and the jam has thickened, about 10-12 minutes more. Set aside to cool.

for assembly

Lay out 2 slices of the bread out on a cutting board. Spread 2 tablespoons of jam on each slice. Divide the muenster cheese and place on top of jam.

In a large nonstick skillet, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium-high heat and cook the coppa in two batches, letting it crisp on for about 30 seconds on each side. Remove the coppa to a plate. Reduce heat to medium-low. Divide coppa slices on top of the cheese on each sandwich and top each with another slice of bread. Add sandwiches to the skillet and let cook until golden on bottom, about 3 minutes. Flip the sandwich and cook until the cheese is melted, about 3 minutes more.

Cook's Notes

The extra jam will last in the fridge up to a week.

total time: 1 hour

active prep: 15 minutes

serves: 2

difficulty: *easy*