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## Not Your Usual Ham & Eggs

By Susie Iventosch

One chilly evening in December, I had an early dinner with a friend at Chow in Lafayette before heading to the Leshner Center to see "A Christmas Carol." To feel cozier, we sat near the fireplace, and as usual at this particular establishment, I ordered a Cobb salad - not necessarily comfort food, but nevertheless, delicious.

My friend ordered a fried egg sandwich, which is something I would probably never have ordered - off any menu, anywhere - in a hundred lifetimes. I was not at all disappointed with my choice, until her meal arrived and she offered me a bite. Oh my goodness ... this was no ordinary egg sandwich! This one was grilled with gruyere cheese, country ham, sliced tomato and a rosemary-Dijon aioli, and it was fabulous! Though the restaurant didn't give me the exact recipe, they did divulge all the ingredients that make it so tasty and I've created a rosemary-Dijon aioli by trial and error.

Many aioli recipes call for an enormous quantity of oil, but this one calls for a reduced ratio of oil to other ingredients. And, because many folks are not comfortable using raw eggs, I tried making the aioli by heating the egg yolks and lemon juice together to 160 degrees, which food safety sources say is hot enough to kill any harmful bacteria.

Tinrin Chew, a certified oncology nutritionist from Lafayette, said the chances of getting salmonella from eggs is slim, but "it's always good to err on the side of precaution, so the idea of cooking the egg to 160 degrees is a good one."\*

In an effort to keep the eggs from scrambling, I mixed the egg yolks with the lemon juice before heating. The egg mixture started to get thick, but I kept whisking to keep it more liquid. The mixture attains 160 degrees rapidly, so keep a watchful eye on the process.

After cooling, use the egg-lemon mixture in the recipe just as if they were completely raw. The sauce isn't quite as pretty, but it's safe!

On another note, it might be a good idea to save this dish for special occasions. It's clear to see, this one is a big cholesterol offender! Still, don't let it deter you from trying it once or twice ... the yummy flavor is worth going off the diet every once in a while. And, if you don't feel like cooking, head down to Chow and order this sandwich with a draft beer, or a glass of their fresh-pressed apple juice.



Photo Susie Iventosch

### Grilled Gruyere Egg Sandwich with Rosemary Dijon Aioli (Serves 4)

- 8 slices of bread (your favorite, whole wheat, sour dough, etc.)
- 4 slices country ham (I used honey maple ham)
- 1 large tomato, sliced into 8 slices
- ½ cup Gruyere cheese, grated
- 4 eggs, cooked over easy
- 1 recipe Rosemary Dijon aioli (recipe below)

To assemble sandwich, spread rosemary-Dijon aioli on two slices of bread. On four of those slices, place one slice of ham, 2 slices of tomato, 2 tablespoons of grated gruyere, and one egg on top. Cover with second slice of bread. Grill or cook in sauté pan until cheese melts. Serve hot with extra aioli sauce.

#### Rosemary Dijon aioli

- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 egg yolks
- 2 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary, finely minced
- ½ teaspoon white pepper
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil (the better the oil, the better the sauce!)

Dash Tabasco

Whisk eggs yolks and lemon juice together in a small saucepan. Heat over medium-high heat until mixture just reaches 160 degrees on a cooking thermometer.

Remove from heat immediately, stir and cool. Add garlic, mustard, rosemary, salt and pepper and place mixture in the bowl of a food processor or blender. With the motor running, slowly add oil in a steady stream and process until thick.

Refrigerate until ready to use.

## \*Egg Safety Center

[http://www.eggsafety.org/f\\_a\\_q.htm#8](http://www.eggsafety.org/f_a_q.htm#8)

What is an adequate temperature to cook an egg?

Egg white coagulates between 144 and 149°F, egg yolk coagulates between 149 and 158°F and whole eggs between 144 and 158°F. Plain whole eggs without added ingredients are pasteurized but not cooked by bringing them to 140°F and maintaining that temperature for 3 and 1/2 minutes. According to the FDA Food Code, eggs for immediate consumption can be cooked to 145°F for 15 seconds. If the eggs are to be used in a recipe with other food items, dilute the eggs with liquid or other ingredients, such as milk, or sugar (at least ¼ cup liquid or sugar per egg as in custard) and cook the egg mixture to 160°F, which will destroy harmful bacteria in a few seconds. Adequate cooking brings eggs and other foods to a temperature high enough to destroy bacteria that might be present.

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