

Ham & Cheese Souffles



5 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup (about 2 ounces) grated parmesan
1 cup small cubed ham
2 small green onions, finely chopped
salt
zest and juice of 1/2 a lemon
3 tablespoons flour
1 1/4 cups milk or half and half
4 egg yolks
6 egg whites, at room temperature
1 cup (4 ounces) grated cheese, or crumbled chevre
1/4 cup minced chives

Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 425°. Grease the ramekins with 1 tablespoon of the butter, and coat evenly with 2 tablespoons of the parmesan. Place on a rimmed baking sheet and set aside.

Place the chopped green garlic and spring onions in a large bowl and soak in cool water for a few minutes, swishing occasionally to loosen any sand or dirt that might be hanging on.

Meanwhile, heat a large skillet over a medium-high flame. Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter, then lift the alliums out of their soaking water, shake off excess water, and toss them in the pan. Reduce the heat to medium, add a few pinches of salt and the lemon zest, and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender but not browned, 10 minutes or so. Add the lemon juice and remove from the heat. Let cool slightly.

Make the béchamel:

Melt the remaining 3 tablespoons of butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add the flour and cook, stirring, for a minute, then whisk in the milk. Bring the mixture to a simmer, whisking constantly, and cook for a few more minutes until thickened. Remove from the heat and add 3/4 teaspoon salt. Let the béchamel cool slightly, stirring occasionally to prevent a skin from forming. Have the egg yolks in a large bowl, and slowly whisk in the slightly cooled béchamel. Stir in the cheese, alliums, the remaining 1/4 cup of parmesan, and the chives.

In a second large, clean bowl (or the bowl of a stand mixer) whip the whites with a pinch of salt until soft peaks form. (This means that when you lift the beater out of the bowl and turn the beater upside down, a peak of egg white should flop over.) Use a large, rubber spatula to immediately stir 1/3 of the egg whites into the souffle batter until almost combined, then gently fold in the remaining egg whites just until no streaks or lumps of egg white remain.

Divide the batter among the ramekins, filling them 1/4-1/2" from the top. Place in the oven and turn the temperature down to 400°. Bake for 20-25 minutes, opening the oven as infrequently as possible, until the souffles are puffed and nicely browned. (The baking time will be longer for 1 large souffle, maybe 35-45 minutes.)