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Grilled cheese goes to amazing places

A classic gets its own month – and some twists in flavor, texture.

By Susan Dalzell
Contributing Writer

For many of us, a grilled cheese sandwich is one of the greatest of all-time comfort foods.

Eating two slices of warm bread, grilled to crispy perfection, glued together by a gooey, melty mess of cheese can be just the thing to turn a so-so day into a pretty-darn-good day. This month in particular is a great time to enjoy one: April is National Grilled Cheese month.

Although there is still something lovely about a classic grilled cheese – maybe a couple of American cheese slices plopped between two slabs of white bread – these days

a grilled cheese sandwich is quite often more complex. There are even restaurants that specialize in the dish.

The Ohio chain Melt, with locations in Cleveland and Columbus, offers a menu of gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches that showcase just how sophisticated the combination of cheese and bread can be. They offer sandwiches with ingredients like crispy breaded eggplant or sauteed shrimp and andouille sausage or sweet corn puree with fried chicken, put between toasted bread slices with – oh yeah – cheese

Closer to home, check the menus of local restaurants and you'll find many serving up complex versions, too, featuring everything from pesto and pancetta to blue and brie cheeses.

That's a trend that Trish Miles has tapped into with her

Grilled cheese continued on **D8**

Grilled cheese

continued from D1

Dayton food truck, C'est Cheese. (She keeps customers informed of her public locations and catering gigs through a twitter feed: @Cest_Cheese.)

Miles offers customers a variety of sandwiches that riff off of a grilled cheese theme.

Her caprice sandwich is comprised of mozzarella with basil pesto and sun dried tomato pesto. A Don Quixote sandwich mixes cheddar and jack cheeses with jalapenos, corn and black bean salsa smeared with a chipotle mayo. Perhaps even more exotic is the wasabi grilled cheese, which includes tuna, blue cheese, mozzarella, celery and wasabi mayo.

"I like to experiment," Miles said. "I get inspired a lot when I eat out and try to create sandwich versions of meals I've enjoyed."



C'est Cheese food truck owner Trish Miles (shown with her father, Stuart Harvey) serves gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches at locations throughout Dayton. CONTRIBUTED

In honor of National Grilled Cheese Month, we asked Miles for a few tips for preparing the yummiest grilled cheese sandwiches.

For starters, get your griddle or skillet nice and hot before putting anything on it. It's worth the wait, Miles said.

Miles' preferred type of

bread is sourdough. The type is important – and often is simply a matter of personal taste – but so is size. "It needs to be big enough bread to hold all the ingredients," she said.

Perhaps surprisingly, Miles does not butter the bread before putting it on that hot grill. She heats the bread on the grill first,

then adds the cheese and ingredients. "The last thing I do is the butter," she said.

Choosing the cheese is another personal choice, but some melt better than others. Miles' favorites are mozzarella and Gouda. She also recommends mixing cheese types. Try combining feta with mozzarella or a blue cheese with a cheddar.

To help the process along, Miles prefers shredded cheese.

For those of us used to using cheese slices, this can feel almost radical. "I throw the ingredients on the grill, scoop it and mix it up, then put it on the warm bread," she said.

Miles' favorite grown-up combination? An onion, mushroom and Gouda sandwich she calls the "Oh My Gouda" or OMG for short.

"That's the one I make for myself if I'm not busy," she said.

We've included the recipe here:

THE OMG

8 ounces mushrooms, sliced

1 medium onion, sliced

2 tablespoons olive oil salt and pepper

4 tablespoons butter

4 slices of sourdough

1 cup Gouda, shredded

1 cup mozzarella, shredded

Spicy mustard mayo

Heat the oil in large skillet. Sauté the onions for about 2 minutes. Add the sliced mushrooms, salt and pepper. Let them soften and brown – 10 minutes or so. Set aside on a plate and cover with foil. (Or if your skillet is large enough, push aside while warming the bread at the same time.)

Warm bread on skillet. Set aside. Return mushroom mixture to skillet. Add cheeses and mix by folding the ingredients together. Place the mixture on the warmest side of the bread and add the spicy mustard mayo. Close the sandwich, butter one side and grill a minute or so. Repeat on the second side. Enjoy!

WHERE YOU'LL FIND C'EST CHEESE

Contact info: @cest_cheese, Cestcheese.info, 937-344-4771

Every other Monday: Research Boulevard and Founders Drive (east edge of Montgomery County); 11:15 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.

Tuesdays: Ghostlight Coffee on Wayne Avenue, Dayton; 11 a.m. — 2 p.m.

Wednesdays: Five Rivers MetroParks office, 409 E. Monument Ave., Dayton; 11:15 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.

Thursdays: Locations vary. Check Twitter: @Cest_Cheese

Every other Friday, beginning April 4: Research Boulevard and Founders Drive

Sat/Sun: Check Twitter.

Weekend nights: Usually at one of the local breweries until 9:30 or 10 p.m. Check Twitter.

Also: Currently scheduling graduation/dinner/birthday parties.