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*A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul.*

May 2019

## SURPRISES FOR THE EARL OF SANDWICH

**Fontina Cheese *Strata***

**Italian Toasted Cheese Sandwiches**

***Lavash* Stuffed with Deviled Egg and Asparagus**

**Mexican Cheese and Green Tomato *Quesadillas***

**Our Five-Cheese Cheesebread**

How very naïve of us to date the sandwich to the time of the John Montagu, the 4th Earl of Sandwich (1718-1792) . . . I guess historians just had not noticed that humans have been enclosing food in bread ever since they learned to make bread. It was delicious, convenient, and certainly precluded the need for silverware. Our ancestors were used to eating with their hands and this was just another hand-held meal option. Yes, the word sandwich may have been coined to honor the Earl who is said to have requested meat between slices of bread so that he could continue the card games he enjoyed, uninterrupted by forks and knives, but the concept of eating food in this manner predates the Earl by centuries.

Surely these early sandwich eaters could never have imagined sandwich shops or that one day you could pick up a paper-wrapped sandwich at a gas station or that a plastic box filled with a sandwich could pop out of a vending machine.

Other countries routinely use the English word sandwich only when using sandwich bread. Rolls and burgers are therefore, strictly speaking, not sandwiches. Sandwich is technically, but narrowly, defined as meat, cheese, vegetables, and savory salads between two slices of bread. That too seems somewhat naïve since Danish *smorebrød* and other open-faced sandwiches, wraps, *burritos*, *calzone*, *tostados*, *quesadillas*, *mu shu*, or the unusual sandwich casserole, so popular in middle America, the cheese *strata*, would then be excluded from this definition which does not recognize and apply customary usage.

In a 2006 case deciding whether a shopping center rental to a *burrito* shop violated a sandwich shop's rental clause that protected the sandwich shop from competition, a Massachusetts court ruling affirmed that a sandwich must have two slices of bread, specifically excluding *burritos*, *tacos*, and *quesadillas*. Maybe you, as do I, find all this technically tiresome since I haven't yet found a term under which I can file the "sandwich-like" items that are not sandwiches. Hence, the following recipes may violate the rules and the sandwich police may arrive at my door . . . and tell me how to file them . . .

The cheesebread recipe I have included here probably never occurred to those involved in these culinary squabbles. It is, however, really just an updating of the suppers of cheese and bread with which our ancestors sustained themselves. The cheese *strata*, which follows, does require plates, knives, and forks as does the *lavash* wrap with egg salad.

## FONTINA CHEESE *STRATA*

TPT - 4 hours and 52 minutes;  
4 hours = refrigeration period

*This is a classic American brunch, lunch, or supper centerpiece dish, extremely popular in the Midwest, that is satisfying enough, with a fruit salad and cookies for dessert, for the hungriest member of the family.*

- 4 slices bread—thinly sliced**
- 4 teaspoons butter—softened to room temperature**
  
- 1 cup shredded (about 4 ounces) Danish Fontina cheese**
- Paprika, to taste**
  
- 1/2 cup fat-free pasteurized eggs (the equivalent of 2 eggs)**
- 1 cup skimmed milk**
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard with white wine**
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste**
  
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan or pecorino Romano cheese, as preferred**

Choose a shallow baking dish into which two slices of bread will fit tightly in a single layer. (*I have found that a 9 x 5 x 3 - inch loaf pan works well for square bread slices. When I have large Italian or French bread, I use a 7-inch cake pan.*) Prepare dish by coating with non-stick lecithin spray coating.

Spread each slice of bread with 1 teaspoonful of *softened* butter. Arrange two slices, buttered side up, in prepared baking dish. Sprinkle evenly with *one-half* of shredded cheese. Top each bread slice with one of the remaining slices, buttered side up. Layer over with remaining cheese. Sprinkle with paprika, to taste.

In a mixing bowl, using a wire whisk, beat pasteurized eggs, milk, mustard, and black pepper. Mix well. Pour egg–milk mixture over bread and cheese layers, being sure to cover all surfaces.

Cover baking dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or preferably overnight.\*

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F.

Sprinkle grated cheese evenly over. Bake uncovered for about 35 minutes, or until custard is set.

Try to serve at once. Otherwise, keep warm on a warming tray for no more than 15 minutes. Divide each *strata* “sandwich” in half with a spatula when serving.

Yields 4 servings  
adequate for 2 people



Notes: \*Overnight refrigeration is a most convenient option if the *strata* is to be served for breakfast or brunch.

This recipe is easily doubled, when required. Do be sure that the baking dish chosen will contain the bread slices snugly.

Prepare as above or with a mild Cheddar cheese for a lovely breakfast or brunch offering. Broiled tomatoes are a good choice with this presentation.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 15.2 g.; FAT = 13.5 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 17.0 g.;  
CALORIES = 252; CALORIES FROM FAT = 48%

## ITALIAN TOASTED CHEESE SANDWICHES

### *Panini de Provolone e Pomidori*

TPT - 12 minutes

*Sunday night suppers used to be such a unique tradition in America that whole cookbooks were compiled to prevent the descent of Americans to the “British cold plate/tea” habit. Sunday dinners were huge post-church, meat-centered meals even during the war years when the roasted meat or poultry from that Sunday meal found its way into at least five disguises as the week progressed. Mom had an elegant silver waffle iron in which the plates could be reversed to make sandwiches and she often made grilled cheese sandwiches on Sunday night. They were the gooiest artery cloggers you could imagine. When we married, I too had to have a waffle iron, albeit non-stick-coated, which, I must admit, has not been out of the cupboard often in recent years, and I too set up a “Sunday night supper” repertoire perhaps based on the old wartime propaganda of “keeping America strong and healthy by keeping the family strong and healthy.” Soon the white bread of my childhood evolved to whole wheat bread in the 1960s and 1970s and to rustic, whole grain Italian artisan breads in the 1990s. The pasteurized cheese products, fortunately, all but disappeared after the war and the gooey artery cloggers evolved into cheese and crackers and this “grilled cheese sandwich” emerged as a lunch or light supper favorite. . . . the history of an era in a grilled cheese sandwich??*

**4 thick slices Italian bread or diagonally cut day-old  
Portuguese rolls or even, diagonally cut French bread**  
**1 1/2 teaspoons butter—melted**  
**1 1/2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil**

**2 medium, ripe tomatoes—sliced into 4 thin slices each**  
**2 large, fresh basil leaves—silvered into chiffonade**  
**Freshly ground black pepper, to taste**  
**2 ounces young, domestic provolone—sliced**

**Italian red onion rings, for garnish, if desired**

Preheat oven to 400 degree F.

Brush both sides of each slice of bread with melted butter and olive oil. Place on baking sheet.

Put two *thin* slices of tomato on each bread slice so that they overlap and provide support for the melting cheese. Scatter basil *chiffonade* over the tomato. Grind black pepper over each. Divide cheese among sandwiches. Bake for about 5 minutes until cheese is bubbling and beginning to brown.

*Serve at once*, garnished with onion rings, if desired..

Yields 4 servings  
adequate for 2 people

Note: This dish easily halved or doubled or tripled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 7.7 g.; FAT = 7.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 25.5 g.;  
CALORIES = 198; CALORIES FROM FAT = 33%



## LAVASH STUFFED WITH DEVILED EGG AND ASPARAGUS

TPT - 24 minutes

*Lavash, Armenian shepherds' bread, is an unleavened bread available in Middle Eastern groceries and often found right next to the fresh pita bread in deli departments of grocery stores. The flat, long sheets of bread are our first choice for quick "bread and cheese" lunches or breakfasts, especially when we can find the whole wheat lavash with flaxseed and oat bran that we like best. Here I have incorporated my favorite deviled egg mixture into a lavash "loaf" wrap for a supper entrée. If lavash is not available, this makes a good filling for pita loaves.*

### 4 asparagus spears—trimmed and well-cleaned



### 4 hard-cooked eggs—chilled and shelled

### 3 tablespoons chopped or slivered Vidalia or Walla Walla sweet onion or Vidalia sweet salad onion, if available

### 1 1/2 tablespoons calorie-reduced or light mayonnaise

### 1 1/2 teaspoons mustard\*

### 1 lavash loaf—9 x 11-inches

In a large skillet filled with *boiling* water and set over *MEDIUM* heat, cook asparagus spears for 8 minutes. Remove asparagus *from boiling water* and plunge the spears *into cold water* to stop further cooking. Drain,

Coarsely chop hard-cooked eggs and turn into a mixing bowl.

Add chopped or slivered onion, mayonnaise, and mustard. Combine thoroughly.

*Just before serving*, spread *lavash* loaves out on bread boards or baking sheets. Place two asparagus spears at each long end of each loaf. Allow the flower ends of the asparagus to extend beyond the edge of the bread. Arrange the asparagus about 2 inches from the long edge of loaf. Divide the deviled egg mixture between the two loaves, spreading it across the bread along side of the asparagus spears. Carefully roll each loaf by grasping the reserved two-inch "salvage" and rolling it toward you over the filling. Grasp the partially rolled loaf with both hands and continue rolling. Transfer to a platter or bread board to serve.

Slice each filled loaf into four serving-sized pieces with a *sharp, serrated* knife.

*Serve at once*, with a knife and fork.\*\*

Yields 4 servings  
adequate for 2 people



Notes: \*My mustard sauce recipe can be found on pp. 685-86 of volume II of *A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul*. It is my favorite mustard for egg salad.

\*\*Do not prepare wraps too far ahead since the filling can soak the bread and ruin your presentation.

This recipe can be halved or doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 9.5 g.; FAT = 8.8 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 6.2 g.;  
CALORIES = 136; CALORIES FROM FAT = 58%

# MEXICAN CHEESE AND GREEN TOMATO *QUESADILLAS*

## *Quesadillas con Queso y Tomatillos*

TPT - 34 minutes

*Quesadillas are wonderful sandwiches. They are simple but do seem to be out-of-the-ordinary sandwich fare and definitely outside of the rigid definition of a sandwich. Tomatillos are tomatoes and they too are wonderful and very out-of-the-ordinary. Whenever I find tomatillos in my market, I gather them up because they keep well for several weeks. Then, we plan to use them for a favorite sauce and for these really different and tasty quesadillas. Remember these ancient members of the Solanaceae plant family must not be eaten raw, they must be cooked first.*



**2 fresh tomatillos**—papery outer skin removed and well-scrubbed\*

**1 quart boiling water**

**1/4 teaspoon sugar**

**4 eight-inch or 2 twelve-inch flour tortillas**—whole wheat, if available

**2 tablespoons sliced ripe, black olives**

**1/4 cup shredded (about 1 ounce) Monterey Jack cheese**

**1/4 cup shredded (about 1 ounce) sharp Cheddar cheese**

**2 tablespoons finely chopped Italian red onion**

**2 tablespoons diced, canned mild green chilies\*\***

**2 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander (cilantro)**

**1/4 cup shredded lettuce, for garnish**

**2 tablespoons light dairy sour cream, for garnish**

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Prepare a baking sheet by coating with non-stick lecithin spray coating.

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, cook *tomatillos* in *boiling* water for 10 minutes. Drain. Cut the stem end from each and slice with a sharp knife.

Place half of the *tortillas* on prepared baking sheet. Divide *tomatillo* slices among the *tortillas*. Sprinkle a little sugar over each green tomato slice. Sprinkle *one-half each* of the black olive slices, shredded cheese, *finely* chopped red onion, diced green *chilies*, and chopped coriander (*cilantro*) over each of the *tomatillo*-spread *tortillas*. Place one of the remaining *tortillas* on top of each prepared *tortilla*, pressing down firmly.

Bake in 375-degree F. oven for about 7 minutes, or until cheese is melted and *tortillas* begin to brown.\*\*\* Remove from oven and transfer to a cutting board. Using a large, sharp knife or a pizza cutter, cut each *quesadilla* into quarters. Arrange on heated plates.

Garnish with shredded lettuce and a dollop of sour cream before serving.



Yields 2 servings

Notes: \*Fresh *tomatillos* are available in the produce sections of many grocery stores. There is no need for further ripening, although they will turn a yellowish color as they do ripen; they are not immature red tomatoes. *Unlike red tomatoes, these can not be eaten raw.* Refrigerate them in a paper bag, not in plastic, when you find them since they will keep well for several weeks.

\*\*Canned green *chilies* are generally available in grocery stores across the United States.

\*\*\*If you have an electric sandwich maker or a *panini* iron, it will be useful for making this *quesadilla*.

This recipe is easily doubled, when required.

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 12.0 g.; FAT = 14.0 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 26.7 g.;  
CALORIES = 276; CALORIES FROM FAT = 46%

## OUR FIVE-CHEESE CHEESEBREAD

TPT - 22 minutes

*When we first married, I started collecting recipes and menus in a special folder labeled “Sunday Night Suppers.” It was not long after that labor finally began to show fruit that the idea of such meals and the little booklets full of ideas melted into the past. Nevertheless, a light supper or tea is still a welcome family meal. Open-faced cheese sandwiches, cheesebread, served with a salad has long been a supper in our family since the days of the “Sunday Night Suppers.” It is a way of cutting the size and calories of our favorite British-style fried cheddar sandwiches. Naan, now available in every grocery store, enables an attractive presentation.*

**4.4-ounce whole wheat naan loaf**  
**2 ounces shredded part-skimmed milk mozzarella**  
**1/2 ounce goat cheese with honey—crumbled or finely chopped**  
**2 tablespoons (1/2 ounce) crumbled feta cheese**  
**4 slices (1 ounce) thinly sliced domestic provolone cheese**  
**2 teaspoons grated pecorino Romano cheese**

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F.

Place *naan* on a baking sheet. Scatter shredded *mozzarella* evenly over the bread. Follow with crumbled goat cheese; then, *feta* cheese. Layer *provolone* cheese over. Sprinkle with grated cheese. Bake in preheated 325 degrees F. oven for 12-15 minutes. Transfer to a breadboard.

*Serve at once.* Slice with a serrated knife.

Yields 8 slices

1/8 SERVING – PROTEIN = 4.8 g.; FAT = 4.4 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 7.6 g.;  
CALORIES = 88; CALORIES FROM FAT = 45%



*Next month we'll explore some new ways to appreciate  
the beautiful taste of the fruit of the vanilla orchid.*

*Please do drop by,*

*Judy*

Please note that all food value calculations are approximate and not the result of chemical analysis.

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