

French Onion Panade



Ingredients

2 stale, loaves crusty sourdough bread, sliced (about 2 lbs)
8 Tbsp unsalted butter, divided

2 Tbsp EV olive oil
5-6 large yellow onions, sliced thin
sea salt
black pepper
2 Tbsp white or champagne wine vinegar
1/4 cup red wine

4 cups chicken stock
4 cups beef stock
1 tsp dried ground sage
2 bay leaves
1 tsp onion powder
1/2 tsp garlic powder

12-15 ounces Gruyère Cheese, grated
6 ounces Parmesan Cheese, freshly grated

Preparation

Prep the Stale Bread:

I bought two loaves of pre-sliced sourdough bread earlier in the week and set out on my baking racks to dry out. On prep day, I lightly toasted each slice in my toaster oven. If this does not work for you, please follow the instruction below to dry and toast on the same day.

Preheat oven to 325.

Lay out the slices of bread on your oven racks in a single layer to toast for approx. 20 minutes. Toast until dried out and lightly golden. Repeat until all slices are dry and toasted. Set aside.

Increase oven temperature to 425, and adjust oven rack to center position.

Prep the Onions

Place a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add 4 tablespoons butter and olive oil. When butter has melted, add your thinly sliced onions and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt. Cook covered for 15 minutes, occasionally stirring with a wooden spoon.

Once the onions cook down a bit and release some liquid, remove the lid and increase heat to medium-high. Continue cooking and occasionally stirring until onions are tender and dark golden brown, about 45 minutes total. Turn off heat, add vinegar and wine and stir to deglaze. Taste, and adjust salt and vinegar as needed — the onions should be sweet, savory and pleasantly tangy. Spoon onions into a heatproof bowl, and set aside.

SIDE NOTE ABOUT STOCK

The original recipe called for only chicken stock. But every recipe I have ever seen and or made used beef stock and that concerned me. I did not want to venture too far off so I used a combination of chicken and beef stocks, and I think it worked really well. The beef stock added a richness that enhanced the broth. Also, the original recipe said to use homemade stock which I did not have. In my mind, a soup stock would be flavored with herbs. That is why I added what I did to flavor the canned stock I used.

Prep Your Stock

Return pot to stove. Add your stock, sage, bay leaves, onion powder, garlic powder and 1 teaspoon salt, and bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Taste, and adjust salt as needed — it should taste like tasty soup broth.

Prep your Cheeses

Grate your Gruyère cheese and place both kinds of cheese in a medium bowl, and mix to combine.

Assemble the Panade

Butter the inside of a deep 9-by-13-inch (or slightly larger) enameled cast iron or glass baking dish. Line the bottom with a layer of toasted bread, breaking up pieces as needed to form a solid layer. Spoon half the onion mixture evenly over the bread. Sprinkle with 1/3 of the cheese mixture. Now add the second layer of bread, the remainder of the onions and another 1/3 of the cheese. Top off with a final layer of bread.

Remove the bay leaves from the warm broth.

Ladle 3 cups of stock over the panade, then wait a minute to allow the bread to absorb the broth. Press down on the panade with a metal spatula to encourage the stock to be absorbed. Keep adding as much

stock as the panade will absorb without pooling on the top layer or overflowing. Save any remaining stock for another dish.

Dot the top layer of bread with remaining butter, then cover with parchment paper and foil. Place the baking dish on a baking sheet to catch any overflow stock, then slide onto the center rack. Bake for 40 minutes, then remove foil and parchment, sprinkle with remaining cheese and return to oven for 15 minutes more. Bake until golden brown.

Remove the panade from oven, and allow it to cool for 10 minutes before serving.