

Grilled Brie Porcini and Caramelized Onion Sandwich

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3 tsps olive oil
3 medium onions, sliced 1/4-inch thick
sea salt
4-6 tbsps butter (for frying the mushrooms and for buttering the bread), softened
1 lb. porcini or other fresh mushrooms, sliced 1/4-inch to 1/2-inch thick
8 slices of bread (Italian, sourdough, whatever you want that makes good grilled cheese sandwiches)
16 oz. brie cheese, sliced

Caramelize the onions: Heat the olive oil in a large sauté or frying pan over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the onions. Stir to coat the onions with oil and spread them out in an even layer in the pan. Stir and spread the onions from time to time. They should soften and turn translucent. Sprinkle a little salt over the onions. Keep stirring and spreading every few minutes as they brown. You want the onions to brown, but you don't want them to burn (which is why you stir them). If the onions are beginning to burn, reduce the heat, but let them continue to cook. My total cooking time was an hour. It takes at least 40 minutes to get a proper caramelization, so just stick with it. If the onions begin to burn again, lower the heat some more and add a little olive oil. They will start to stick and leave a fond (that brown residue) on the pan. Scrape that up (it's full of flavor) and stir it in with the onions. Continue doing that until your onions are caramelized and dark brown.

Pan-sear the mushrooms: Melt 2 tablespoons in a sauté or frying pan over medium-high heat. Place the mushroom slices flat on the pan. Sear until golden brown on the bottoms (about 3 minutes). Flip the mushrooms and sear the other sides until golden. Add more butter as needed. Sprinkle with salt and remove from pan.

Make the sandwich: Butter one side of each slice of bread. For each sandwich, lay one slice of bread, buttered-side down. Layer brie cheese, caramelized onions, and mushroom slices on the bread. Sprinkle a little sea salt on the mushrooms to taste. Top the sandwich with another slice of bread, buttered-side up. Repeat for the rest of the sandwiches. Heat a large sauté or frying pan over medium-high heat. Set the sandwiches on the pan with the brie-side closest to the pan (mushrooms should be on top). Reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook until the brie has melted and the bottoms of the sandwiches are deep golden in color. Flip the sandwiches. Cook until the bottoms are deep golden in color. Remove from heat and serve. Makes 4 sandwiches.