French Onion Grilled Cheese

[**ALI SLAGLE**](https://cooking.nytimes.com/search?q=Ali+Slagle)

* **YIELD**2 servings

Romulo Yanes for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Vivian Lui.

Grilled cheese is a near-perfect food on its own, but adding bacon, [kimchi](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1019879-kimchi-grilled-cheese)or, in this case, heaps of caramelized onions really makes it special. Caramelizing onions takes a good half-hour, so save this recipe for when you have a little extra time and company (this recipe serves two). If time permits, you could even prep them ahead in a [slow cooker](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/11170-caramelized-onions) (see attached). Rather than layer the grated Gruyère and the warm caramelized onions in the sandwich, you should stir them together before assembling, which guarantees that the cheese will melt evenly throughout and that each bite will contain the perfect ratio of fragrant cheese to jammy onions. A splash of sherry, red-wine or white-wine vinegar added to the onions balances out the buttery flavors, but a side salad dressed with a tangy mustard vinaigrette would do the trick, too.

INGREDIENTS

* **4** **tablespoons unsalted butter**
* **1** **pound yellow or Vidalia onions, peeled, halved and thinly sliced**
* **Kosher salt and black pepper**
* **2** **teaspoons sherry, red-wine or white-wine vinegar (optional)**
* **4** **ounces Gruyère cheese, grated**
* **4** **slices bread, cut no wider than 1/2-inch thick**

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PREPARATION

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, melt 2 tablespoons butter. Add the onions and season with salt and pepper. Cover and cook, stirring once or twice, until the onions are softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Uncover, reduce the heat to medium-low, and cook, stirring occasionally, until deep golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. If the onions look dry or like they might burn, add a few tablespoons of water at a time, scraping up any browned bits that are stuck to the bottom of the skillet. If desired, once the onions are done, deglaze the skillet with vinegar and cook until the liquid has evaporated, about 1 minute. Transfer the onions to a medium bowl and season to taste with salt and pepper. Wipe out the skillet, or wash it, if necessary.
2. Add the cheese to the onions and stir to combine. Put down two slices of bread, and scoop half of the cheese-onion mixture onto each one. Top with the remaining slices of bread, and press down gently.
3. In the skillet, melt 1 tablespoon butter over medium heat. Add the sandwiches and cook until the bottoms turn golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes, reducing the heat to prevent toast from darkening too quickly, if needed. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon butter, flip the sandwiches, press down and cook until the cheese has fully melted and the bottoms turn golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Serve immediately.

Crock Pot Caramelized Onions

[**JONATHAN REYNOLDS**](https://cooking.nytimes.com/search?q=Jonathan+Reynolds)

* **YIELD**Makes 4 cups

INGREDIENTS

* **3** **pounds onions, thinly sliced**
* **4** **tablespoons unsalted butter**
* **¼** **cup balsamic vinegar**
* **¼** **teaspoon salt**

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PREPARATION

1. Combine all ingredients in the container of a crockpot (or other slow cooker). Cover and cook on low heat for 12 hours. Serve with pork, swordfish or tuna, grilled eggplant or roasted or grilled chicken.