TRADITIONAL WELSH RAREBIT

Mature cheddar, mustard and ale grilled until bubbling—far more than cheese on toast.



⏱️ QUICK INFO

- Serves: 4
- Makes: 4 large rarebits
- Prep: 15 minutes
- Cool: 10–15 minutes
- Grill: 3–5 minutes
- Total: About 35 minutes
- Grill setting: High

🍏 INGREDIENTS

🧀 RAREBIT MIXTURE
• 15 g butter
• 2 tsp plain flour
• 1 tsp English mustard powder
• ¼ tsp cayenne pepper, optional
• 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
• 150 ml brown ale, stout or full-cream milk
• 300 g mature cheddar, finely grated
• Black pepper
🍞 TO SERVE
• 4 thick slices sturdy white or sourdough bread
• Extra Worcestershire sauce, optional

METHOD

1. Build the base
Cook butter, flour, mustard and cayenne for 1–2 minutes.

2. Add ale or milk
Whisk in gradually; add Worcestershire and simmer until thick.

3. Melt the cheese gently
Use low heat and add it one handful at a time.

4. Cool + toast
Cool 10–15 minutes; toast the bread on both sides.

5. Spread + grill
Cover to the edges and grill 3–5 minutes until bubbling.

🪶 RABBIT CAME FIRST

'Welsh rabbit' was recorded in 1725, and Hannah Glasse printed a mustard-touched version in 1747. 'Rarebit' appeared later, by 1785, reshaping the original name. The familiar tale that cheese replaced unaffordable rabbit is unproven. What remains certain is the dish's enduring Welsh identity: good cheese, toast and fierce heat.

🔥 KOOK'S SECRET

Cool the mixture until spreadable, then take it right to the crusts. It stays on the toast and protects the edges under the hot grill.

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WELSH RAREBIT — FULL METHOD

THE CALM, COMPLETE METHOD

1. GRATE + ORGANISE

Finely grate the cheese. Choose ale or stout for malty depth, or milk for a milder alcohol-free version.

2. COOK THE ROUX

Melt butter over medium-low heat. Stir in flour, mustard and cayenne; cook 1–2 minutes until foaming without colouring.

3. WHISK IN THE LIQUID

Gradually whisk in ale or milk. Add Worcestershire and simmer 2–3 minutes, stirring, until the sauce coats a spoon.

4. MELT CHEESE GENTLY

Turn heat to low. Add cheese one handful at a time, stirring smooth before adding more. Season; never boil. Cool 10–15 minutes.

5. TOAST + SPREAD

Heat grill to high. Toast bread lightly on both sides. Spread rarebit mixture generously right to the edges.

6. GRILL + SERVE

Grill 3–5 minutes until bubbling and deeply golden. Rest 1 minute; serve immediately with extra Worcestershire, chutney or salad.

💡 THE SMART STRETCH

Serve half a rarebit beside tomato or vegetable soup to make six to eight satisfying lunches. For a fuller supper, add a fried or poached egg—traditionally called buck rarebit—or spoon the mixture over split baked potatoes.

ALLERGENS: MILK + GLUTEN; CHECK SAUCE FOR FISH • USE MILK IF AVOIDING ALCOHOL • CHILL WITHIN 2 HOURS • STORE AT 5°C OR COLDER UP TO 3 DAYS • REHEAT GENTLY

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