

Quiche Lorraine

For the Filling

¼ pound chunk bacon
3 large eggs
1 cup milk
½ cup heavy cream
¾ teaspoon salt
Nutmeg to taste
Pepper to taste
½ cup grated Gruyère
2 tablespoons butter

For the Shell

1½ cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
5 tablespoons frozen unsalted butter
5 tablespoons frozen lard or vegetable shortening
3-4 tablespoons ice water
Pat of butter

For the Shell

Place the flour and salt in the bowl of a food processor and process for 1 minute. Grate the butter on the large holes of a grater directly into the flour in the processor. Cut the frozen lard or vegetable shortening into tiny pieces with a sharp, heavy knife and add to the processor.

Pulse just until very coarse crumbs are formed. You should still see small pieces of butter. With the processor running, gradually add the ice water a tablespoon at a time. Stop adding water as soon as the pastry forms a ball. Remove the pastry from the processor and knead slightly on a floured board to form a flat disk. Wrap the pastry in plastic and refrigerate several hours or overnight.

Lightly butter the bottom and sides of a 9-inch quiche pan. Place a rack in the middle level of the oven and preheat it to 425°.

Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured board and line the quiche pan with it. Chill the pastry in the freezer for about 15 minutes. Gently line the pastry with aluminum foil, and fill the shell with beans or rice to weight it down. Place it in the oven and bake for about 12 minutes or so until the pastry is set. Remove the shell from the oven, carefully remove the beans and foil, and, prick the bottom of the pastry with a fork to keep it from rising.

Return the shell to the oven and bake a few more minutes until it is very lightly colored. Remove the shell and let it cool on a rack.

For the Filling

Cut the bacon into lardons about 1/2-inch long and ¼-inch thick. Sauté the lardons in a skillet until lightly browned. Gently press the lardons into the bottom of the pastry shell. (They may not adhere.)

Move the oven rack to the upper-third level and preheat the oven to 375°. Place a baking sheet on the rack while the oven is preheating. This will help bake the bottom of the quiche better and will also catch any drippings from the quiche while it is baking.

In a bowl, beat the eggs with the salt, pepper, and nutmeg until frothy, then gradually beat in the milk and cream until well combined. Stir in the grated Gruyère.

Place the pastry shell on the heated baking sheet and pour the filling into the shell over the bacon. Distribute tiny dots of the butter over the top. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes until the quiche is puffed and browned. Place on rack, remove the outer ring, and serve the quiche hot or at room temperature.