

Herbed Gougères

½ cup water	¾ cup grated Gruyère, plus extra for topping
½ cup milk	¼ cup grated Parmigiano
4 ounces unsalted butter	2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh rosemary
1 teaspoon kosher salt	2 teaspoons fresh thyme
1 cup flour	⅛ teaspoon black pepper
4 large eggs	¼ teaspoon nutmeg

Place two racks in the oven, one in the lower third, the other in the upper third. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Preheat the oven to 425°.

In a medium saucepan, combine the water and the milk. Cut the butter into pieces, and add it, along with the salt, to the water and milk. Bring this mixture to a boil.

Remove the pan from the heat and add all the flour at once, stirring vigorously with a wooden spoon to blend completely. Return the pan to the heat. Continue to beat until the mixture leaves the side of the pan, forms a mass, and starts to film the bottom of the pan.

Remove the pan from the heat, and make a well in the center of the paste. Let the mixture cool for a minute. Add one egg to the center of the well and beat until it is absorbed. Continue beating in the remaining eggs one at a time, until the mixture is smooth.

Beat in the ¾ cup of Gruyère, the Parmigiano, herbs, pepper, and nutmeg.

Fit a pastry bag with a ½-inch round tip. Place the pastry bag into a large cup or small bowl, and fold the top part of the bag over the cup or bowl for easier filling. With a rubber spatula, carefully fill the bag with the paste. Pipe tablespoon-sized round mounds 2 inches apart onto the baking sheets. If the mounds are uneven, gently smooth the tops with the back of a spoon. Sprinkle the remaining grated Gruyère on top of each mound.

Place one sheet on each of the oven racks. Bake for 20-25 minutes until they are puffed, golden brown, and crispy to the touch, switching racks and turning the sheets halfway through the baking period. Remove the sheets from the oven, and pierce each puff with a sharp paring knife. Return the sheets to the turned-off oven with the door ajar for 10 minutes. This will ensure that the puffs are dry inside. Serve immediately, or cool on a rack and freeze the puffs in a plastic bag.

Just before serving, place the frozen puffs on a baking sheet in a 425° oven for 4-5 minutes. Serve hot with cocktails.