HOMESTEAD WIFE LIFE

# Cake Salé

*A French savory breakfast bread to make ahead for the holidays*

In France, a “cake” is anything baked in a loaf pan, sweet or savory. Cake salé is the savory one: a quick bread with no yeast, no kneading and no rise time. Bake it now, slice it, freeze it, and breakfast for a full house is ready in minutes.

## The Base Batter

*One batter, endless loaves. Makes one loaf. For two loaves, double it, then divide by weight on your scale.*

| | |
|---|---|
| **180 g** | all-purpose flour |
| **10 g** | baking powder (about 2 tsp) |
| **3 large** | eggs (about 150 g) |
| **100 g** | whole milk |
| **90 g** | olive oil or a neutral oil |
| **100 g** | grated cheese (see each loaf) |
| **see each loaf** | fine salt |
| **to taste** | freshly milled black pepper |
| **1 tbsp** | extra flour, for tossing the add-ins |

### USE THE PAN YOU HAVE

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|---|---|
| **9 x 5 inch** | The whole batch fits. Bake 45 to 55 minutes. A French 25 cm loaf pan works the same way. |
| **8 x 4 inch** | Fill the pan no more than three-quarters full; it holds about a quarter less. Bake 50 to 60 minutes, checking from 45. Spoon the extra batter into 2 or 3 lined muffin cups and bake them alongside for 20 to 25 minutes, a little cook's treat. |

*Whatever the pan, trust the skewer and the 200°F (93°C) center over the clock.*

## Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Butter the pan and line it with a parchment sling.
2. Whisk the flour, baking powder, salt and pepper in one bowl. Why whisk? It spreads the leavening evenly, so there are no bitter pockets and the loaf rises evenly.
3. Whisk the eggs, milk and oil in a second bowl until smooth.
4. Pour the wet into the dry and fold just until no dry flour shows. Lumpy is fine. Why stop there? Overmixing builds gluten, and the loaf turns tough with tunnels through it.
5. Toss the add-ins with the tablespoon of flour so they don't sink, then fold in the cheese and add-ins.
6. Scrape into the pan and level the top. Bake for the time for your pan (left), until deep golden, a skewer comes out clean and the center reads about 200°F (93°C).
7. Rest 10 minutes in the pan, lift out by the sling, and cool completely on a rack, at least 1½ hours, before slicing or wrapping. Sliced warm, the inside squashes and turns gummy.

# Two Ways for the Holiday Table

LOAF 1

## Traditional French

*Ham, green olive and Gruyère. The one you'd find in a French home kitchen.*

| | |
|---|---|
| **100 g** | Gruyère, grated (the batter's cheese) |
| **150 g** | cooked ham, in 1 cm cubes |
| **100 g** | green olives, pitted, halved, drained and patted dry |
| **1 tbsp** | flat-leaf parsley, chopped (optional) |
| **2 g** | fine salt |

### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Pat the olives dry.** Extra brine is extra moisture, and the crumb goes gummy around them.
- **Why Gruyère?** It melts smoothly and tastes nutty. Comté or Emmental work too.
- **Less salt** than you'd think. The ham and olives bring their own; taste a crumb of batter.

LOAF 2

## American Breakfast

*Sausage, Canadian bacon, sharp cheddar and chives. Breakfast on a plate, baked into one slice.*

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|---|---|
| **+ 1 yolk** | added to the base batter's 3 eggs |
| **100 g** | sharp cheddar, grated (the batter's cheese) |
| **120 g** | breakfast sausage, weighed after browning, crumbled, drained and cooled |
| **100 g** | Canadian bacon, in 1 cm cubes |
| **10 g** | chives, finely sliced |
| **a pinch** | fine salt, and generous black pepper |

### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Cool the sausage first.** Hot sausage starts cooking the egg in the batter and melts the cheese into streaks.
- **Why a yolk and not chopped egg?** Hard-boiled egg turns rubbery in the freezer. The yolk gives the egg flavor instead.
- **Like it spicy?** Use hot sausage, or whisk 1 to 2 tsp Calabrian chili paste into the wet ingredients. Go lighter than tastes right; the heat builds after freezing.

> **Keep the add-ins about the same weight from loaf to loaf.** Same weight means the same bake time and a loaf that holds together when you slice it from frozen. That's what lets two different loaves come out of the oven together.

PRINTABLE BONUS

# Loaf 3: The Vegetarian

*Sun-dried tomato, roasted pepper, golden onion and goat cheese*

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|---|---|
| **60 g** | Parmesan, finely grated (the batter's cheese; it gives the loaf structure) |
| **50 g** | oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained, patted dry and chopped |
| **80 g** | roasted red peppers, patted very dry and chopped |
| **1 medium** | onion, sliced and cooked slowly in butter until soft and golden (about 80 g cooked), then cooled |
| **100 g** | goat cheese, chilled and broken into small chunks |
| **1 tbsp** | fresh thyme leaves |
| **3 g** | fine salt |

### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Dry everything well.** Wet vegetables make a gummy crumb. Pat the tomatoes and peppers until the paper towel comes away nearly dry.
- **Goat cheese goes in last,** folded in just a few turns, so it stays in creamy pockets instead of disappearing into the batter.
- **Why thyme and not basil?** Thyme holds its color and flavor in the freezer. Basil darkens.
- **Cool the onions** before they go in, for the same reason as the sausage in Loaf 2.

## Make It Your Own

Once you know the base, cake salé is a way to use what you have. Keep to this shape and almost anything works:

**1 · The cheese**
About 100 g of a good melting cheese in the batter. Hard, salty cheeses like Parmesan: use a little less.

**2 · The add-ins**
About 250 g in total, cut small, cooked if raw, cooled, and patted dry.

**3 · The salt**
Adjust for what you add. Cured meats, olives and salty cheese mean less salt in the batter.

*Ideas to try: smoked salmon, dill and cream cheese · roasted butternut, sage and Gruyère · leftover turkey, sage and sharp cheddar for the morning after Thanksgiving.*

# How a Chef Wraps It for the Freezer

1. **Cool completely,** then slice about 2 cm (¾ inch) thick. Slicing first means your guests pull out only what they need.
2. **Waxed paper between the slices,** then wrap the whole loaf in waxed paper. Waxed paper for moist bakes like this one; parchment for drier bakes.
3. **Plastic wrap,** pressed tight to push out the air.
4. **Into a thick reusable zip bag** with a label card tucked inside. The bag stays clean and reusable, and anyone in the house can heat it.
5. **Keeps about 3 months** in the freezer.

> **Waxed paper never goes in the oven.** Always unwrap before reheating.

### REHEATING

**Slices from frozen**

- Toaster, on a medium setting
- 350°F (180°C) oven, 8 to 10 minutes
- Buttered skillet, 2 to 3 minutes per side. The best way: crisp, golden edges.

**A whole loaf**

- Thaw overnight in the fridge, still wrapped.
- Unwrap, wrap in foil, and warm at 325°F (165°C) for 15 to 20 minutes.

## The Holiday Morning Plan

| | |
|---|---|
| **Up to 3 months ahead** | Bake, cool, slice, wrap and freeze. Tuck in a label card. |
| **The night before** | Moving a whole loaf to the fridge? Do it now. Slices go straight from the freezer. |
| **The morning of** | Heat the skillet, butter it, and crisp the slices while the coffee brews. Set out fruit, a pot of butter and good jam, and breakfast is done. |

## A Leftover Special: Savory Pain Perdu

Day-old slices make the best savory French toast. Whisk 2 eggs with 60 g milk and a pinch of pepper. Dip each slice briefly, fry in butter until golden on both sides, and plate each one with a soft fried egg, a few chives and a little grated cheese melted over the top. It looks like a restaurant brunch plate, and it started as yesterday's loaf.

*✂ Cut along the dashed lines. Write in pencil or permanent marker; ink can smear if the bag sweats while it thaws.*

## Cake Salé · Traditional French

*Ham, green olive and Gruyère*

**FROZEN ON** _____ **ENJOY BY (ABOUT 3 MONTHS)** _____

**REHEAT**

- **Slices from frozen:** toaster on medium, or 350°F oven 8 to 10 min, or buttered skillet 2 to 3 min per side.
- **Whole loaf:** thaw overnight in the fridge. Unwrap (waxed paper never goes in the oven), wrap in foil, 325°F for 15 to 20 min.

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## Cake Salé · American Breakfast

*Sausage, Canadian bacon, cheddar and chives*

**FROZEN ON** _____ **ENJOY BY (ABOUT 3 MONTHS)** _____

**REHEAT**

- **Slices from frozen:** toaster on medium, or 350°F oven 8 to 10 min, or buttered skillet 2 to 3 min per side.
- **Whole loaf:** thaw overnight in the fridge. Unwrap (waxed paper never goes in the oven), wrap in foil, 325°F for 15 to 20 min.

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## Cake Salé · The Vegetarian

*Sun-dried tomato, roasted pepper, onion and goat cheese*

**FROZEN ON** _____ **ENJOY BY (ABOUT 3 MONTHS)** _____

**REHEAT**

- **Slices from frozen:** toaster on medium, or 350°F oven 8 to 10 min, or buttered skillet 2 to 3 min per side.
- **Whole loaf:** thaw overnight in the fridge. Unwrap (waxed paper never goes in the oven), wrap in foil, 325°F for 15 to 20 min.

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HOMESTEAD WIFE LIFE · FREEZER LABEL CARDS

*✂ Blank cards for everything else you bake ahead.*

**WHAT'S INSIDE**

**FROZEN ON** **ENJOY BY**

**REHEAT**

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