

Here's a super simple way to enjoy all the same flavors as a classic Kentucky Hot Brown Sandwich, but in a make-ahead dip version. You'll notice that my recipe does not mention adding salt—this is not accidental. I've used deli sliced turkey to keep it simple. Between that and the bacon, the recipe doesn't need more salt. Make it ahead and refrigerate up to 3 days before baking. This recipe serves 6 to 8 appetizer portions.

Ingredients

4 slices thin uncured bacon, cut into 1/2" pieces
About 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1/2 cup sweet onion
3 oz. thinly sliced deli turkey, chopped into smaller pieces—about 1/2 cup packed
1 pkg. (8 oz.) Neufchatel cream cheese
1/4 cup light mayo
1/4 cup light sour cream
Small handful fresh Italian parsley, cleaned and chopped
1 small (10 oz.) can Rotel (mild version), drained completely
3/4 cup Gruyere cheese, shredded (I used the Swiss-Gruyere blend from Trader Joe's)
2 Tbsp. grated parmesan cheese, plus more sprinkled on top
Freshly ground black pepper

Tools

Cast-iron skillet
Stand mixer or electric hand mixer
Rubber spatula
Cutting board and knife
Small non-stick skillet
Oven-safe baking dish (volume about 4 cups)*

Instructions

Place cast iron skillet over medium heat and cook bacon pieces until crispy. Set aside on paper towels to drain; when cool, chop the crispy pieces into smaller, basically uniform bits.

Place small skillet over medium heat and add olive oil. When it begins to shimmer, add chopped onions and sauté until caramelized. Add chopped turkey to the pan and continue to sauté until turkey pieces have browned edges. Set aside to cool.

In mixer bowl, whip cream cheese until smooth. Add mayonnaise and sour cream and whip again until blended, stopping once to scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl. Add Swiss-Gruyere blend, parmesan, parsley and tomatoes and mix gently until blended (don't whip too much or tomatoes will lose their shape and turn the cream cheese pink). Season with freshly ground black pepper.

Kentucky Hot Brown Dip – Comfort du Jour

Remove the bowl from the mixer and use a silicone spatula to gently fold the turkey and onions, plus half of the crispy bacon, into the cream cheese mixture. Transfer the dip mixture to an oven-safe baking dish*, and top with remaining crispy bacon and another sprinkle of parmesan (if desired). Proceed with baking, or cover and store in the fridge up to 3 days, until ready to serve.

*Or divide the mixture into separate ramekins for sharing with friends during social distancing!

Baking and Serving

Preheat oven to 350° F. Bake, loosely covered with foil, for about 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake 15 minutes longer, or until hot and bubbly (time may vary, depending on size of dish and refrigeration).

Serve piping hot, spread on crackers, baguette slices or the brioche toasts available at Trader Joe's.