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Grown-Up Grilled Cheese Sandwiches with Cheddar and Shallot

SERVES 4

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Look for a cheddar aged for about one year (avoid cheddar aged for longer; it won't melt well). To quickly bring the cheddar to room temperature, microwave the pieces until warm, about 30 seconds. The first two sandwiches can be held in a 200-degree oven on a wire rack set in a baking sheet.

- 7 ounces aged cheddar cheese, cut into 24 equal pieces, room temperature**
- 2 ounces Brie cheese, rind removed**
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine or vermouth**
- 4 teaspoons minced shallot**
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened**
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**
- 8 slices hearty white sandwich bread**

1. Process cheddar, Brie, and wine in food processor until smooth paste is formed, 20 to 30 seconds. Add shallot and pulse to combine, 3 to 5 pulses. Combine butter and mustard in small bowl.

2. Working on parchment paper-lined counter, spread mustard butter evenly over 1 side of slices of bread. Flip 4 slices of bread over and spread cheese mixture evenly over slices. Top with remaining 4 slices of bread, buttered sides up.

3. Preheat 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat for 2 minutes. (Droplets of water should just sizzle when flicked onto pan.) Place 2 sandwiches in skillet; reduce heat to medium-low; and cook until both sides are crispy and golden brown, 6 to 9 minutes per side, moving sandwiches to ensure even browning. Remove sandwiches from skillet and let stand for 2 minutes before serving. Repeat with remaining 2 sandwiches.

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