



What's the first thing that springs to mind when you think of cheese fondue? Chances are, whatever it is, the mental image in your mind right now is straight out of the 70s. While they were hugely popular not that long ago, it seems as though fondue parties were a thing of the past. That is, until they started making a comeback in trendy circles recently.

Your complete guide to hosting a cheese fondue party

We're entirely on board. What's not to love about a pot of melted cheese and a table of loved ones to share it with?

How to plan your fondue party

To begin with, you're going to need to figure out exactly what you're going to serve. In terms of the fondue itself, you have two options: you could do a pre-cooked and warmed cheese sauce, or fill your pot with broth or oil that cooks the meat before dipping them in a variety of cheesy dips. Whatever you plan, just make sure you have the right equipment.

Next up, think about portions. The best accompaniments are served in bite-sized pieces, so consider how many guests you're expecting. A single person can probably eat about 20 cubes of bread, plus around 200g each of meat, vegetables and cheese. So all up you'll need to account for at least 600g of food per person. Add in a little bit more for those with bigger appetites!

Finally, plan the whole evening. What about a chocolate fondue option for dessert? An array of fruits and sweets such as marshmallows or biscuits, all dipped in creamy melted chocolate, is the perfect way to end your meal.

How to make cheese fondue

Your cheese fondue will be the cornerstone of the evening, so it is crucial you get the flavours and consistency right. When selecting the cheese, you'll need to think not only about the individual cheese flavours, but how they will pair together. To do this correctly you should select cheeses from the same region and milk type, with a tangy cheese to punch up the flavours of something more mild. This cheese fondue recipe uses more traditional Swiss cheeses:

Ingredients

½ Clove garlic

1 Cup dry white wine

200g grated Emmentaler cheese

200g grated Gruyere cheese

1 tablespoon flour, sifted

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. Rub the garlic clove around the inside of your stainless steel double boiler pot to start things off with a bit of flavour that won't overpower the cheese
2. Place over low heat, with simmering water in the bottom pot
3. Add your wine and heat until you see steam
4. Combine both cheese and flour in a bowl and toss until the flour coats the cheese, this will help you get a great roux without and clumps
5. Add your cheese one handful at a time, allowing it to melt before adding the next cheese
6. Continue this way until all the cheese is completely melted into the wine, forming a smooth and glossy sauce
7. Stir in lemon and stir until full incorporated
8. Season with salt and pepper
9. Transfer to a fondue pot to keep warm while serving

Fondue alternatives

Whether you don't have a fondue kit or simply want to give your guests more options, don't think that you're bound by the laws of the heated pot to have a fondue party.

You can get a great melted cheese using baked brie or camembert, with a drizzle of honey on top for added sweetness. Alternatively, you can purchase Raclette cheese, which melts easily under a grill and can be scraped on top of your accompaniments.

Rather than making it a sit-down dinner, present your cheese fondue as a centrepiece in a cocktail party setting, allowing your guests to have another nibble whenever they walk past.