

# CO-OP CHEESE

Monthly Newsletter

*March 2009*



Can you sense it? Spring is coming! Although March did not come in quietly, soon, treacherous snow, freezing temperatures, and long dark nights will be a thing of the past. To celebrate the coming of Spring, we are featuring not a region, not a cheese type, but a method of eating cheese that people have enjoyed for decades. Fondue! What could be more celebratory than melty, gooey cheese? This month, you will learn about the history of fondue, discover some great cheeses used to make fondue, receive fantastic fondue recipes and get tips on throwing your own fondue dinner party.



**“Spring is nature’s way of saying, ‘Let’s Pary!’”**

*--Robin Williams*

## The History of Fondue

From necessity in 18th century Swiss villages, to French gastronome Jean Brillat-Savarin, to Chef Konrad Egli who in 1956 introduced Fondue Bourguignonne at New York’s Chalet Swiss restaurant, to today’s informal communal dining, comes the Fondue to Swarthmore Co-op.

For history buffs, some believe the original fondue began with a recipe in Homer’s Iliad (Song XI), where a mixture of Pramnos, shredded goat’s cheese and barley was passed round in a solid gold cup.

Legend has it that “If a woman drops a cube of bread into the fondue, she has to kiss all the men; if a man drops the bread cube, he has to buy a bottle of wine. If the person drops a cube of bread for the second time, he or she must host the next fondue party”.



**CAQUELON** is the name of the traditional fondue pot, made of heavy earthenware. Other variations include glazed ceramic or enameled iron. All are designed to promote even heat distribution and heat retention.



# CHEESE OF THE MONTH

This month we celebrate **FONDUE** and the traditional cheeses for fondue rather than simply focusing on one particular cheese. **Introducing our cheese group of the month...The Fondue Five!**

Create your own fondue by combining two or three of these great cheeses.

**APPENZELLER** is an ancient Alpine cheese made of raw cow's milk. During its aging, the wheels are washed with a brine of white wine or cider and spiced with pepper and herbs. The cheese develops small eyes, full flavor and bit more nose and more fruit than Gruyere.

**EMMENTHALER** is a hard swiss cheese known for its large eyes, mild and slightly nutty-tasting flavor. The cheese originally comes from the Emme Valley in the canton of Bern. The cheese is aged at least 4 months to 14 months.

**GRUYERE** is a cow's mild cheese made into 80 pound wheels that are aged for 5 to 12 months. Swiss Gruyere is a solid cheese with no holes. Gruyere is an excellent melter, for gratins and toppers for onion soup.

**BEAUFORT** is one of the noble cheeses of the French Alps, famous since Roman times. Beaufort has a very distinct aroma reminiscent of the pastures on which graze the Tarentaise and Abondance cows, which provide the milk

**COMTE** is produced in the rich mountain pastures of the Jura. Comte is made year-round by small cooperative dairies known as fruitieres. One of the most popular cheeses in France, Comte has a nutty, slightly salty yet sweet taste.



# RECIPES OF THE MONTH

We couldn't settle on just one great fondue recipe. There are too many and such a variety of cheeses to use! Here are two fondue recipes to try.

Write us about your fondue experience.

## Traditional Swiss Fondue

### *Ingredients:*

1 garlic clove, halved  
1 cup dry white wine  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
2 cups (8 oz.) shredded Gruyere cheese

2 teaspoons cornstarch  
2 tablespoons kirsch  
Dash white pepper  
A pinch of grated nutmeg  
French bread cut in cubes

### *Instructions:*

1. Rub inside of fondue pot with cut garlic clove.
2. Pour in wine and lemon juice; cook over medium heat until bubbly. Turn heat to low and gradually stir in cheese with a wooden spoon.
3. In a small bowl, blend cornstarch with kirsch. Blend into cheese and continue to cook, stirring, 2 to 3 minutes or until mixture is thick and smooth. Do not allow fondue to boil. Season with white pepper and nutmeg.

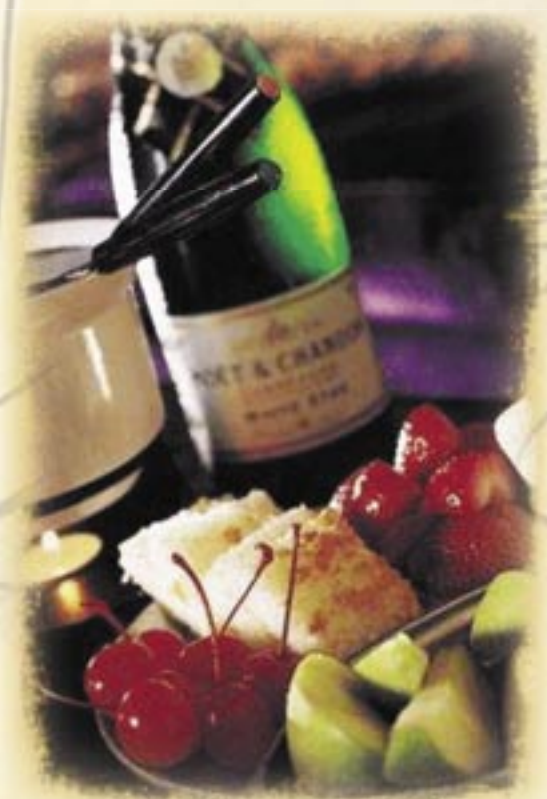
Serve with bread cubes.

*Yields: 4 servings*



# RECIPES OF THE MONTH

## Brie, Roquefort & Mushroom Fondue



### *Ingredients:*

- 1 1/2 teaspoons olive oil
- 4 ounces fresh shiitake mushrooms, stemmed, caps diced
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1 1/2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 12 ounces chilled 60% (double crème) Brie cheese (do not use triple crème)
- 2 ounces chilled Roquefort cheese
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 13-ounce loaf crusty white bread, cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes
- Vegetables (such as carrot sticks, blanched broccoli, cauliflower and boiled small potatoes)

### *Instructions:*

Heat oil in heavy medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms, shallot and thyme; sauté until mushrooms just begin to soften, about 2 minutes.

Place flour in large bowl. Cut rind from Brie; discard rind. Cut Brie into cubes; drop into flour. Toss to coat; separate cheese cubes. Crumble Roquefort into same bowl; toss to coat. Place wine in heavy medium saucepan and bring to simmer over medium heat. Add cheese by handfuls, stirring until melted after each addition. Continue stirring until smooth.

Stir mushroom mixture into fondue. Season with generous amount of pepper. Transfer to fondue pot. Set pot over candle or canned heat burner. Serve with bread and vegetables.



# Throwing a Fondue Dinner Party

## ***How Much Food?***

Most fondue recipes make 4 to 6 servings – so 3 pots of cheese, meat, and dessert fondue will feed 12 to 18 people.

Another way to determine how much food you will need at your party is according to how much food an average person can eat:

- 1/3 to 1/2 loaf of French bread
- 8 ounces of meat
- 8 ounces of seafood
- 4 to 6 ounces of cheese
- 8 ounces of vegetable
- 8 ounces of fruit

So figure about 1 to 1.5 pounds of food per person

## ***Use the Right Pot***

Ceramic pots are best for cheese, chocolate, or other dessert fondues where dipping is involved.

Metal fondue pots are great for oil, wine, broth, or beer fondue recipes in which the bits of food are cooked within the pot.

A combination of pots is a practical way to make the most of your fondue festivities.

## ***Cooking***

Always cook your fondue on the stove beforehand and never let your fondue boil in their pots under tea lights or other heating methods. This will only make the fondue mixtures rancid and tasteless. Let the mixtures simmer under tea lights or cooking gels just enough to keep warm.

## ***Courses of Fondue***

Traditional fondue parties start with cheese, continue with meat and then follow with a dessert. Don't feel bound by these traditions, but it's a good idea to have several types of fondue to please varying tastes.

If you want to experiment with making your own cheese recipe, make sure you melt cheeses of the same family, or textures together so they melt and blend evenly.

## ***Table Arrangement***

Set up different fondue stations or tables for each different fondue. For example if you have 3 types of fondue you could arrange 3 small tables, or one long table. Design and decorate around each type of fondue.

## ***Fondue Etiquette***

You may want to demonstrate these techniques to your younger guests who are new to fondue.

- The fondue fork shouldn't touch your mouth – pull off the food onto provided plate.
- Double-dipping is not allowed.
- Don't dip with your fingers.
- If you lose your food in the pot leave it there and remove it out with a teaspoon.

Resource: [www.entertainingsuite101.com](http://www.entertainingsuite101.com), article written by Ellen Wilson

