

Good-times guide

Making happy memories together!

Invite the gang for fondue!

On a cool evening, nothing's more scrumptious than warm cheese fondue served with delicious dippers, the perfect drinks and casual conversation!



To-Do List

The day before:

- ❑ Buy bread and dippers
- ❑ Collect little forks or soak skewers

The day of:

- ❑ Cook fondue
- ❑ Cut up bread
- ❑ Blanch veggie dippers
- ❑ Make martinis, or pour wine or cider



1 Pick the time!

"A cheese fondue party is perfect for weekends, but also doable on a weeknight," says Divya Gugnani, author of *Sexy Women Eat*. "The prep work is minimal; there is only one real course; and since the eating is communal, you don't need complicated table settings."

2 Make two types!

"I like to offer two types of cheese fondue, each in its own small pot. This way, there's more variety and everyone isn't huddled over one pot. If you don't want to make two separate recipes, try making a classic fondue for one pot, then add bacon bits or chopped smoked almonds to the second for a delicious variation." (Need an extra pot? Target has 'em for about \$15.)

3 Start it on the stove!

"The secret to making fondue for a party is to prepare it in a regular nonstick pot on the stove and then transfer it to your fondue pots, which usually use a small candle as their heat source," says Gugnani. "You'll want to transfer it less than 10 minutes before guests start eating. To streamline your prep, shred your cheese and measure out your flour ahead of time. Also, set aside a bit of extra wine in a small cup. You can use it to thin the fondue if it starts to get dry."

Best-Ever Classic Fondue

Instead of calling for minced garlic, Gugnani's recipe uses garlic powder to save time. Makes four generous servings.

● Pour 1 cup dry white wine, like Pinot Grigio, into saucepot set to low heat. Add 1/2 lb. shredded Swiss cheese and 1/2 lb. shredded Gruyere cheese slowly. Stir in the cheese so it melts nicely. Stir in 2 Tbs. all-purpose flour. When cheese is melted, add 1/4 tsp. salt and 1/4 tsp. garlic powder. Transfer to fondue pot.

Cheddar-Marsala Fondue

"This is my favorite nontraditional fondue," says Gugnani. "The flavors are unique and familiar at the same time. One pot should be enough for four guests."

● Simmer 1 cup Marsala wine in a saucepot. Add 1 lb. shredded sharp Cheddar cheese slowly. Stir after each addition of cheese until it is melted. Stir in 2 Tbs. all-purpose flour. When mixture is melted and smooth, stir in 1/8 tsp. salt and 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper. Transfer to fondue pot.

Tip! Find more recipes at BehindTheBurner.com.

4 Add your dippers!

"Don't overwhelm guests with too many choices," says Gugnani. "You want lots of bread, some apples, a blanched veggie and one unexpected option."

❖ **Apples.** "Slice apples to a medium thickness and toss them in a bit of lemon juice so they won't turn brown."

❖ **Bread cubes.** "Square-inch cubes cut from a loaf of French bread (day old is fine) are ideal," says Gugnani. Want a greater variety? Skip rye, which is too soft, and go for pumpernickel or ciabatta.

❖ Veggies.

Choose from broccoli florets, bell pepper pieces, carrots, squash or small mushrooms. "All vegetables should be quickly blanched so they're easier to chew."

❖ **Fun extras.** Try kielbasa slices, cooked tortellini or roasted red baby potatoes.

Tip! Dippers should all be at room temperature; cover them with wax paper to keep them fresh.



5 Serve complementary sips!

"Really flavorful drinks work best with fondue. Offer one alcoholic pick and one nonalcoholic option."

❖ **Red wine.** "The robust flavor of red wine is tasty with cheese and bread," says Gugnani.

❖ **Apple cider.** "The sweetness complements the cheese."

❖ **Dirty martinis.** "The briny olive juice makes 'em perfect with creamy fondue."

To make: Combine 1 1/2 oz. vodka or gin, 1/8 oz. dry vermouth and 2 tsp. olive juice in cocktail shaker half filled with ice. Strain into chilled glass.



Never eaten fondue?

● **No double-dipping!** All pieces should be bite-size, so it takes only one swirl to coat it with cheese.

● **Skewer one piece of bread, apple or veggie at a time.** Twirl it in the cheese and let it drip for a second.

● **Don't touch the skewer to your lips.** If you must, use another fork to put the piece on a plate, then eat it with the second fork.