**Baked Goat Cheese**

This isn’t a strict recipe, but a technique, and can be made with any size goat cheese. It’s best to select one that’s fresh and soft, without a firm rind.

I use sourdough (levain) bread crumbs made from stale bread but you can certainly use what’s available where you are, as long as they’re from a sturdy loaf. If you buy breadcrumbs that are already toasted, simply mix them with the seasoning ingredients and skip the toasting in the oven. Some people use finely-chopped hazelnuts in place of some of the breadcrumbs.

Leftover breadcrumbs can be stored in the freezer, or strewn over whole-wheat pasta tossed with greens cooked with garlic and red chile flakes.

1. Cut you goat cheese into disks about 3/4-inch (2cm) thick. You can use anything from small crottins to a larger cheese, slicing it in half across the equator. Marinate the disks in olive oil, which can be done up to two days in advance. If done in advance, I like to add some herbs, such as fresh rosemary and thyme, as well as some black pepper, and let them rest in the refrigerator.

Preheat the oven to 375F (180C).

2. Mix together fresh bread crumbs (for four servings, about 1/2 cup, 60g) with a generous pinch of sea salt, and just enough olive oil to moisten the crumbs, about 1 to 2 teaspoons.

3. Spread the crumbs on a baking sheet and cook the crumbs until golden brown and crispy, 5 to 10 minutes, stirring a few times during baking.

4. Once toasted, let cool and mix in 1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon chopped parsley.

5. Brush the goat cheese rounds with olive oil. (Unless they’ve been marinated. In which case, pluck them from the oil and let the excess drip off briefly.)

6. Dredge the goat cheese in the toasted breadcrumb mixture until they’re completely coated and bake on a cookie sheet or in a gratin dish, either non-stick or lightly-greased, for 5 to 8 minutes, or until warmed through and soft when you press gently in the center.

7. Remove from over and use a spatula to lift the goat cheese rounds from the pan.

Serve with a green salad (dressed with hazelnut oil is great), and thin slices of toasted levain (sourdough) bread, a favorite crisp bread, or crackers. This also makes a great appetizer.