

Fondue-ing is fun

WHEN THE FROST is on the pumpkin, it's time for a bit of dunkin'. And what better way than the Swiss fondue way? A fondue party is ideal for a cold winter day and it's easy on the hostess and fun for the guests.

You should have the proper equipment for a proper party. This consists of a large earthenware pot and a warmer to place it on. The warmer should be equipped with a candle or an alcohol burner. You also will need long handled fondue forks [they're usually two-pronged] to hold the hunks of bread for dunking into cheese.

Here are some key points:

- THE CHEESE must be cooked over low heat or it will be stringy.
- During the eating, the fondue must be kept just hot. A candle in your warmer is sufficient heat source.
- Choice of cheese is important. Naturally, it should be Swiss [imported if you can afford it]. Two of the best are emmentaler and gruyere.
- The wine that goes into fondue is important. It should be a dry variety with a bit of acidity. The acid keeps lumps from forming.
- The wine you drink with the fondue also is important. It should be lightly chilled and dry. We suggest either a Swiss or a German wine.
- You will need regular dinner forks for removing the cheese-dunked bread to your plate and for eating it.
- The fondue should be first cooked on the kitchen range with the earthenware pot on an asbestos pad. When everything is blended and bubbling, you transfer the pot to your warmer in the dining room.
- Keep the fondue bubbling lightly through the party.

SWISS CHEESE FONDUE

Four servings

- ½ pound each: gruyere, emmentaler cheese
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 clove garlic, peeled, cut in half
- 2 cups dry white wine
- 3 tablespoons kirsch [cherry brandy]
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon each: nutmeg, paprika
- 2 loaves french bread, cut into cubes

Dice cheeses. Put flour on sheet of wax paper; dredge cheese in it. Rub inside of fondue pot with garlic, pour in wine, kirsch, and lemon juice. Place pot on kitchen range over moderate heat. When liquid begins to bubble, add cheese, stirring constantly with wooden

Wife's night out

By Johnrae Earl



spoon. When cheese is melted, stir in nutmeg and paprika. Transfer fondue pot to warmer at dinner table. Keep it bubbling slightly over burner [candle or alcohol].

Each guest should grasp a fondue fork and spear a hunk of bread which is then twirled in cheese until well coated. Cheese-laden bread is transferred to guest's dinner plate and removed with a dinner fork and eaten. The process is repeated until everyone is either exhausted or filled to capacity.

Someone should stir the fondue from time to time to keep it fluid.

It's fun to set up some sort of a penalty for anyone who loses his bread in the fondue pot.

All you need to make this a satisfactory light meal is a crisp tossed salad and a bottle of dry white wine.

WHILE THE SWISS claim to have originated fondue, their Italian neighbors also have a version. The Italian dish, however, isn't as much fun but it does provide a delightful light luncheon or late night treat.

Here, too, the choice of cheese is important and Italian cheese, naturally, is recommended. Fontina usually is available in supermarkets. If you can't find it, try nonaged munster.

ITALIAN CHEESE FONDUE

Four servings

- 2 cups fontina cheese cubes
- ½ cup half-and-half, scalded
- 2 egg yolks, beaten with 2 tablespoons hot half-and-half
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 4 slices toast, crusts removed
- 4 fresh mushrooms, sliced thin, sauteed in butter 3 minutes

Put cheese cubes in top of double boiler. Add hot half-and-half and place over simmering water. Stir constantly until smooth. Quickly stir in egg yolks, butter, and salt. Stir with whisk until thick and shiny. Cut each slice of toast into four triangles; put in four warmed individual casseroles or ramekins. Pour fondue over, garnish with mushroom slices, and serve immediately.

A bottle of dry white wine, lightly chilled, goes nicely with this fondue, too.