

Title:

North America Gets Cheesy with Raclette Grills

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Summary:

Yes, the fondue pot of the 70's was pretty cheesy, but in this century, nothing is more cheesy than raclette. In recent years fondue pots have experienced a resurgence in popularity, and with them has come the raclette grill. Though not traditionally well known in the US and Canada, raclette is suddenly experiencing a boom in popularity.

Article features info on the history of raclette, various raclette grills available, serving suggestions and recipes.

Keywords:

cooking, raclette, fondue, swiss, switzerland, food, recipes, entertaining, grilling, eating,

Article Body:

Yes, the fondue pot of the 70's was pretty cheesy, but in this century, nothing is more cheesy than raclette. In recent years fondue pots have experienced a resurgence in popularity, and with them has come the raclette grill. Though not traditionally well known in the US and Canada, raclette is suddenly experiencing a boom in popularity.

Raclette is a semi-soft, relatively mild, easily melted cheese from Switzerland. The term also refers to the cooking method of melting cheese at a tabletop grill and serving with a variety of accompaniments.

Legend has it that the original method for melting the raclette cheese began when Swiss herdsmen settled down for the night in their camps. They placed a hunk of cheese near their campfire and as it melted, scraped it off onto a slice of bread.

Today, this same meal is mimicked but with much greater variety of foods, and with electric raclette grills that are much more convenient. Though the melting method has changed over the years, this simple and entertaining meal has remained just as enjoyable for entertaining evenings with friends and family.

There are several kinds of raclette grills that you can choose from.

Traditional raclette grills hold a half- or quarter-round of raclette cheese on an angle, with a heating element melting the surface of the cheese, which drips onto a plate of dried meats and other accompaniments.

Today, the most common raclette sets include a cheese-melting element with a grill for cooking meats at the table. They provide up to 8 people with individual cheese pans and feature non-stick, dishwasher safe surfaces for convenience and easy cleanup. Perfect for entertaining!

Portable raclette using fondue-type burners are also available for camping and picnicking.

A raclette grill can provide not only a delicious, hot-off-the-grill meal, but also provide a lot of fun for family and friends. For optimum enjoyment, serve traditional raclette with a Fendant or other light-bodied dry white wine. If you are grilling meats, serve a wine appropriate for the meats.

A traditional Swiss raclette meal uses raclette cheese with the following accompaniments:

- baguette bread
- small cooked potatoes
- small gherkins
- pickled onions
- charcuterie meats such as salami or proscuitto

You can also get very creative with a raclette meal. A departure from tradition - but an adventure in taste - could include:

Raw meat for grilling and dipping into sauces:

- Italian sausage cut into 1/4" slices
- Chicken tenderloins cut into 1" pieces
- Beef tenderloin cut into 1/2" cubes
- Shrimp and Scallops

Thinly sliced cheeses:

- Brie
- Camembert
- Oka
- Cheddar
- Cambezola

Vegetables, blanched to al-dente, such as:

- Mushrooms
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Asparagus

Here are two excellent recipes for dipping sauces for your meats and vegetables:

Pimento Sauce

3/4 cups mayonnaise
1/4 cup sour cream
2 tablespoons tomato sauce
1/2 cup canned pimentos or 1 red bell pepper, roasted with skin removed
Salt and pepper, to taste

Blend all ingredients in a blender. Season to taste. Serve chilled.

Cucumber Garlic Sauce

1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup plain yogurt
1/2 cup sour cream
2 gloves of garlic, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cucumber, peeled and finely chopped
1 tablespoon of finely chopped chives or green onion
1 teaspoon finely chopped parsley
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
fresh ground pepper

Mix well all ingredients. Serve chilled.