

FONDUE NEUCHÂTELOISE

The Ingredients:

(Serves 2)

1/2 lb. Switzerland Swiss, shredded or finely cut

1/2 tablespoons flour

1 clove fresh garlic

1 cup Neuchâtel wine (or any light dry white wine of the Rhine, Riesling or Chablis types)

Salt, pepper, nutmeg to taste

1 loaf French or other white bread with a hard crust (or at least four hard rolls), cut into bite-size pieces each of which must have at least one side of crust.

(Optional) 3 tablespoons Kirschwasser or 2 tablespoons of any non-sweetened fruit brandy such as apple jack, slivowitz, cognac, etc., or light rum.

The Preparations:

Dredge cheese with flour. Rub the cooking utensils well with garlic. Pour in the wine and set over a very slow fire. When the wine is heated to the point that air bubbles rise to the surface (never boiling point), stir with a fork and add the cheese by handfuls, each handful to be completely dissolved before another one is added.

Keep stirring until the mixture starts bubbling lightly. At this point add a little salt and pepper and a dash of nutmeg (optional). Finally add and thoroughly stir in the Kirschwasser (or other brandy). Remove the bubbling fondue from the fire and set immediately onto your preheated table heating element.

The Eatings:

Apart from the gustatory enjoyment there is much inner contentment in a fondue. It requires rather close friendship among the participants because they are literally going to eat out of the same pot! And here's one time when you do your dunking not shyly, but openly and with the full approval of everybody.

Spear a piece of bread with a fork, going through the soft part first and securing the point in the crust. Dunk the bread in the fondue in a stirring motion until your neighbor takes over to give you a chance to enjoy your morsel. While each one takes his leisurely turn in rotation, the stirring will help maintain the proper consistency of the fondue and will assure that each piece is thoroughly coated with melted cheese.

Care should be taken that the fondue keeps bubbling lightly. This is done by regulating the heat, or by turning it off or on. If the fondue becomes a little too thick at any time, the defect can be rectified by stirring in a little pre-heated (never cold!) wine. Towards the end, some of the melted cheese will form a brown crust at the bottom of the utensil. When this happens, keep the heat low in order to prevent the utensil from cracking. The crust can easily be lifted out with a fork and is considered to be a special delicacy.

Note: Omit cold or iced drinks during the meal. To those who like it, a pony of Kirschwasser or other brandy may be served. But all should finish with a cup of hot coffee or tea.

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