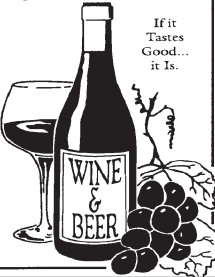


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WHAT ABOUT THAT FOOD?

Cheese — Product of a Genius Culinary Mind (GCM) or Great Culinary Mistake (GCM)?
 by Kerry Altiero, chef/owner, Café Miranda

So, cheese. Are we talking Velveeta (which as it happens is in the spellchecker complete w/cap!) or a fine Gorgonzola (also in there!)? Yes, I know that Velveeta resembles some kind of boat-bottom sealer when melted and Gorgonzola smells like ... nevermind. While both are derived from some sort of dairy product, they certainly come out different in the end. But the story of their creation could be linked. Picture this:

In the foggy mists of time Cro-Magnon milks a beast. "Wow, beast gives lots more today of white stuff that tastes good and seems to keep me alive." Since Cro-Magnon cannot consume all the white stuff, he saves it in a container made from sheep's insides, a forerunner of haggis (another story we will save until later). Said Cro-Magnon is soon eaten by Tiger who has been watching patiently while the fattening-up process was completed. Cro's pals discover his remains a week later along with the container which is now a bit, say, aromatic & chunky. Being Men, who of course are not far evolved from Dogs (who eat anything 'cause if it turns out not to be food they figure they can puke it up later), they make fast work of the white stuff. As for the Velveeta, picture a huge factory where some tank springs a leak, and Bob, who was just "sweeping up," gives the leakage the dog test.

So G.C.M. or G.C.M.? Think of those cheeses that somehow smell awful but are sooooooo good. Ripe Brie, Gruyere, Raclette, Stilton, Parmesan and so on. Are any of these classic cheeses well-conceived experiments of the past or were the inventors/guinea pigs/test pilots just hungry?

Speaking of hungry, here are a couple recipes that are standards at the wildly successful Café Miranda. If you need a recipe for Velveeta, look on the side of the box...

WHATTA YAN NEED:

We do these on an oven-safe nine-inch serving dish, w/an "underwear" (underliner) of a ten-inch plate w/a doily to keep bubbling hot cheese from scarring our staff.

Oh yes, and you'll need eight tons of Masonry Brick oven w/a wood fire in it. Oh, don't have one? Listen up, we'll make do.

A regular old oven, rack on 2/3 the way down (or 1/3 the way up), a pizza stone is nice but not necessary. Now CRANK that baby up to its max, let it heat up, wait for 10 minutes, then go hit the broiler. Wait a couple of minutes and put your already prepared plate in there. What you are doing is impersonating a wood-fired brick oven. This works pretty well. How many you can do at a time depends on broiler size, so you can get coverage on the plates. Those of you w/a separate gas broiler that is underneath & not part of your oven are out of luck....

All of the following will require vigilance. One minute done, the next, POOF! BURNT, try again.

NOTE! All cheeses have different cooking times as they vary in density, water & fat content.

I'll lay these out as for one-person one-plate & you can just multiply by guests & oven space you have available.

ROASTED SHARP CHEDDAR & GARLIC CLOVES

- 4 ounces sharp cheddar
- 4 roasted garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 basil leaves
- 6 "grape" tomatoes
- A bit of olive oil to coat tomatoes
- Kosher salt & cracked pepper


Method:

Slice the cheese into 1/2 inch or so pieces. They are going to melt so they don't have to be pretty, but the thickness will have to be close.

Distribute the garlic on the plate.

Arrange the cheese on top, w/o overlapping slices.

FORK, KNIFE & SPOON



Hello!

Welcome again to the Fork, Knife & Spoon column — I hope you have enjoyed what we have brought you the last two months. Once again I am featuring a guest columnist from a local restaurant. Also appearing in this month's issue is a section on holiday cooking for the diabetic. In a season practically dedicated to food preparation, those people with certain dietary restrictions need to be very mindful of what is being consumed. I offer several recipes that have been adapted for diabetic cooking.

— Deena Carafelli

This month's featured recipe is from
Kerry Altiero — chef/owner of
CAFÉ MIRANDA
 at 15 Oak Street, Rockland
 Serving Dinner Tuesday-Sunday, from 5:30
 Tel: 594-2034

Place the tomatoes on the cheese.

This can be done days in advance. However, bring this stuff to room temp if it was in the ice-box, as the plate can shatter with the temp change.

All systems go with the oven? Yes? Toss that in and when it bubbles & browns sit down to eat w/some great Café Miranda Focaccia or Flat bread!

Try a Geary's Pale Ale from Portland Maine w/this. Yum.

STOP & SMELL THE GORGONZOLA

2 ounces imported Genuine Eye-talian Gorg. The domestic Gorg that is readily available does not work for this as it does not have the creaminess to melt well.

- 1 roasted red pepper cut into strips
- 2 basil leaves

Method:

Place the basil leaves on the plate.

Schmear the cheese over them.

Randomly arrange the roasted pepper slices around the plate.

Cook using the above-described method.

Now for beverages. Gorg is a toughie as it smells like, well we ARE in polite company eh? Try a Bonny Doon Winery Le Gigare

SORT OF QUESO FUNDIDO

Before your Mexican Gandma comes over to beat me with a stick I have to say we interpret food. I often say we are unencumbered by classicism, exact knowledge & travel experience but we DO have soul....

3 ounces of good Jack cheese. That pepper stuff is ok for a simpler version, however in this case we will add the spice via some chorizo

- 4 ounces chorizo
- 1 Poblano pepper, seeded, cut into strips
- 1 ounce sliced (THIN!) red onion
- 1 tablespoon frozen corn kernels, defrosted
- olive oil to coat
- lime wedges

Method:

Toss the onion, corn & pepper in just enough olive oil to coat.

Slice the cheese & spread evenly on the plate.


Place all that other tossed stuff over the top spreading evenly out to the edges.

Crumble the chorizo over it all,

Do that oven thing, serve w/ lime...

See Café Miranda on the web www.cafemiranda.com

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