

Sumptuous Simple Sandwiches

Gruyere, Black Forest Ham & Red Onion Open Faced Sandwich, Top crusty bread with sliced gruyere, black forest ham, olive Tapenade or mustard, thinly sliced red onions, spinach or lettuce & sliced tomato - serve open-face.

Jarlsberg, Chikken & Sun-Dried Tomato on Sourdough, Fill buttered sourdough bread with slices of Jarlsberg or Emmentaler, sliced grilled chicken breast, drained oil packed sun-dried tomatoes and serve with crunchy cornichons

Monterey Jack, Chutney & Proscuitto, Fill buttered crusty bread with sliced Monterey Jack, mayo or your favorite chutney and thinly sliced proscuitto.

Greek Country Style Pita, Cut a white or whole wheat pita bread in half & fill each half with a Greek country style salad or slaw of sliced cucumber, diced tomato, crumbled feta, kalamata olives & cabbage drizzled olive oil & seasoned with minced fresh oregano & fresh ground pepper.

Pastrami & Munster on Rye, Spread dark rye with butter & Dijon mustard & fill with thinly sliced pastrami, sliced munster, a few dried cherries or cranberries & lettuce. Replace the lettuce with a couple spoonfuls of well-drained sauerkraut & Russian dressing to make a great Reuben.

Havarti, Sprouts & Roasted Red Peppers, Spread light rye or sourdough with butter & Dijon mustard & fill with sliced havarti, alfalfa sprouts & strips of roasted peppers.

Goat Cheese & Smoked Salmon Bagels, Split a plain, onion or poppy seed bagel & spread one half with room temperature mild white chevre or goat cheese, or Boursin. Layer with thinly sliced smoked salmon & sliced red onion & arugula.

Ricotta & Sun-Dried Tomato Baguette, Spread a split baguette with ricotta or room temperature goat cheese or cream cheese, drained oil packed sun-dried tomatoes & arugula.

Croque Monsieur, Spread 2 slices of sourdough bread with butter & Dijon mustard & fill with Emmentaler & sliced ham. Grill in a skillet turning to brown both sides & pressing down to compact sandwich.

Shrimp, Avocado & Jarlsberg Muffin, Butter & lightly toast split English muffin. Spread with aioli or chipotle mayonnaise top with cooked, peeled & deveined shrimp & then top with your favorite Swiss or Jack cheese. Place under preheated broiler until cheese melts. Top each slice with avocado half & cherry tomato half.

A Cheese Tasting Party

A cheese tasting follows the same rationale as a wine tasting. Start with the mildest cheeses & progress to the strongest cheeses. For a memorable party that requires no cooking, try a cheese-pairing buffet, mating each cheese with a complementary fruit, vegetable, selection of sausages pates, olives & bread or crackers. Wine enhances cheese & offers many options, from a tasting of California Zinfandels or French Beaujolais, to a choice of Merlots, Pinot Noirs or Cabernet Sauvignon & of course Champagne, Pinot Grigio or Sauvignon Blanc from at least two to three vintages. Offer a combination of at least six cheeses each served with your choice of accompaniments.

Shopping

Count on one -half bottle of wine & 1-1/2 ounce of each cheese per person. Figure on 1-1/2 whole fruits & 4 to 6 ounces of vegetable & or pate & sausages per person. For your guests, offer a combination of three cheeses paired with fruits & vegetables & three cheeses paired with pates, sausages & olives.

Serving

Let cheese warm to room temperature for about an hour before serving depending on the kind of cheese & the heat of the day. Soft cheeses of course need less time to come to room temperature than firm cheeses. Serve in wedges or blocks & accompany with a cheese plate, cheese slicer or knives so guests can cut their own. Arrange & serve the cheeses beginning with the mildest & ending with boldest in flavor. Thinly sliced baguette, cut focaccia into small squares & offer good quality crackers. Place a different wine at each cheese station.

Simple additions such as olives, grapenuts or fruit can enhance a cheese course. Plan savory or spicy accompaniments for a starter course & sweeter accompaniments for end of the tasting.