



THE ART OF SWISS FONDUE

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Nobody ever told the Swiss fondue is a 1970s throwback, akin to shag carpet and tape recorders. It remains the national dish of Switzerland, at least in the winter months; nothing screams “Tourist!” like someone eating fondue on a restaurant terrace in the summer. You should have fondue indoors, preferably after skiing, with icicles encrusting the restaurant windows and frigid stars making an appearance above a jagged black outline of mountains.

Fondue was originally a simple peasant dish that used up leftover cheese, which was melted in a pot and eaten with chunks of bread. It remains a simple meal, though argument rages over the types and proportions of cheese used to make it. The traditional fondue uses a half-half mix of Gruyere and Vacherin, a dash of white wine and a smidgin of garlic. Some fondues contain Emmenthal or other cheeses and a dash of kirsch. Tourist restaurants sometimes add ingredients like Chantilly cream or truffle.

Speare a cube of bread firmly on your fondue fork and zigzag it across the bottom of the fondue pot, as this stirring will prevent the cheese from sticking, burning or separating over the course of the meal. Spearing a bit of crust helps ensure your bread isn’t lost in the pot, which might result in your having to pay for the wine, drink a shot or kiss the person on your left.

It’s considered poor etiquette to dip while a fellow diner is dipping. Never double dip. Eat your cube carefully from your fork without touching the fork itself, or transfer it to your plate. Enjoy your fondue with a side of

charcuterie, cornichons and pickled onions.

Dry, acidic white wine should be the accompanying drink of choice – look for the Chasselas or Fendant grape variety. There may be shots of kirsch. Lemon tea is considered the only non-alcoholic alternative. The Swiss look askance at soft drinks or beer, muttering that its coldness coagulates cheese in the stomach to uncomfortable effect – though scientific studies have shown this to be a furphy.

Many foreigners overlook the best part of fondue. Leave a last cheese coating at the bottom of the pot and allow it to develop into a dark, delicious crust that you can scrape off with a knife and crunch up. If you’re still hungry (not likely), the Swiss sometimes crack eggs into the pot and scramble them.

**ZIGZAG YOUR FORK ACROSS THE
BOTTOM OF THE POT TO PREVENT
THE CHEESE FROM STICKING.**

