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BAKED CAMEMBERT WITH HONEY & APPLE CIDER

camembert au four, miel et cidre

It is difficult and expensive to obtain the Licence IV ("License 4") that allows French bars to sell alcoholic beverages on their own (with no food); it is much easier to get a restaurant-type liquor license, authorizing the sale of alcohol only in the context of a meal. In Paris, this has led to the creation of many little wine bars that offer small plates and nibbles with the wine they serve.

I love what they create, often with minimal space and equipment, as well as the casual flexibility of these bars: Get there in early evening to catch up with a friend over a drink and marinated olives, and if the conversation is as good as the wine, it may extend into the night as you order more small plates, graduating to more filling ones.

One such dish is the *camembert au four*, a baked Camembert cheese that is brought to the table, bubbling and fragrant, like a miniature fondue. In keeping with the origins of a genuine Camembert, I flavor mine with apple cider or brandy from Normandy, and a touch of honey.

Serves 4

8 to 9 ounces (220 to 250 g) Camembert cheese (see Note/below)
1 tablespoon hard apple cider or apple brandy, such as Calvados
2 teaspoons honey
Fresh baguette, for serving

Remove the cheese from the refrigerator 1 hour before you begin. Strip it of its box and wrapper, remove any sticker or label, and put it in an ovenproof bowl or baking dish in which it fits snugly but not too tightly.

Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).

Using a sharp knife, make deep cuts across the top of the Camembert in a crosshatch pattern. Drizzle with the apple cider and spoon the honey on top. Bake until melted and browning, 15 to 20 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving with bread.

Note

The authentic Camembert cheese is the Camembert de Normandie, protected by an appellation of origin. It is made with raw milk, so it can't be imported into North America, but other French Camemberts made with pasteurized milk are; I recommend you seek those out.



KEEP REFRIGERATED - Manufactured by La Ferme de la Trappe - 78255 La Haye-en-Toscane - France
Produced in France
Soft ripened cheese
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FERMIER
CAMEMBERT

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