



# Fondue

Cranberry Fondue

## take a dip into something new.

Fondue may be a dish that you've tasted only once or twice, but it's enough to make a lasting memory. The taste and consistency are so rich that it seems best for a special occasion, but according to culinary sources expert in the field, fondue is back in style: recipes are plentiful, enough for the holidays and anytime.

Culinary author and instructor Hallie Harron says that she got the idea to write a fondue cookbook because she observed how people were eating out a lot less in this sluggish economy.

"People started entertaining more in their homes, and of course, fondue lends itself to a table of people sitting around, poking things in something that is going to cook, then talking, then eating, and then another bite, another story, another bite, and another story, so that is what I am talking about," she says. Harron's book, *Not Your Mother's Fondue*, (Boston: The Harvard Common Press, 2010) includes exotic sounding fondues, such as German Beer Fondue and Warm Hummus Fondue, but they don't take hours to make or require sophisticated cookware, except for a fondue pot.

"The way that I teach, write and cook is always the easiest way out. Save a step, get it done, and get it done so it tastes wonderful," Harron says. The book, which includes a short introductory section on the history of fondue, has the traditional cheese and chocolate fondue recipes, but also fondues that could be eaten for an entire meal, such as Sunday Supper Lentil Fondue, Greek Feta and Shrimp Fondue and French Onion Soup Fondue.

According to the introductory section in the book, fondue originates from Switzerland and may date as far back as the sixteenth century. Fondue meals were a practical way to make a flavorful use out of every scrap of food. In the United States, Harron writes, fondue was an obscure dish ➤



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Caramel Rum Fondue



Swiss Cheese Fondue



Chocolate Fondue



until the 1970s, when fondue pots became a popular gift item, particularly for newlyweds. Since that time, fondue fell by the wayside, but it has been resurrected in recent years in concert with the slow food movement, which is a style of food preparation that uses natural and local ingredients for cooking—and emphasizes the community and good environmental stewardship.

Harron recommends buying what is known as a 3-in-1 fondue pot, which can generally be used for all types of fondues. Fondue in this modern age can be made in an electric fondue pot, which controls the heat better, Harron notes.

“The electric fondue pot can be placed in the center of the table, and

if you don’t have an outlet nearby, you can just get an extension cord,” she says. “On the inside, it’s a type of Teflon material, so it’s easy to clean, and you don’t have to worry about burning the cheese anymore. You can keep the temperature constant.” There are still

plenty of fondue pots on the market that use a flame, which preserves the romance and the ambiance. A nice fondue pot can be purchased for under \$50.

Harron is a prolific cookbook author—she has written 18 cookbooks—and she spends part of the year in the village of Mollans, France, where she has a cooking school ([www.maisonmollans.com](http://www.maisonmollans.com)) with her business partner, Mary Evans of Minneapolis. This past summer, she instructed students on how to prepare fondue, and flavors were abundant because there are more than 600 types of cheese in France.

“So this summer, when I was teaching, and I would want a cheese fondue, I would do a little variation on a theme, and started using cheeses I had never used before.”

You don’t have to travel to France to experience the diversity of fondue. The Melting Pot restaurant, with locations in Indianapolis and Greenwood, is solely devoted to the pleasure of serving and eating fondue. The menu has all sorts of cheese and dessert fondues, and fondues that can be eaten as an entrée, such as different types of chicken and shrimp fondue. The entrée fondues are offered in four different styles of cooking, including broth-based styles of preparation. Brett Scowden, a Lafayette native, is the managing partner of The Melting Pot. He is co-owner of the restaurant, with Bennet Ackerman. The Indianapolis Melting Pot opened in 1997 and the Greenwood restaurant in 2006.

“The communal experience inherent



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in fondue has always created excitement,” Scowden says.

At the Melting Pot, diners can watch the process of preparing the fondue because the server mixes a portion of the fondue at the table, which enhances the communal experience, but also heightens the anticipation of taking the first dip and the first bite.

Scowden explains there are a few tips to making cheese fondue with the right consistency: Use shredded cheese to help melt the cheese.

“It’s also really key when you use whatever base you are using, whether it’s a wine base, a beer base or a vegetable broth, that it is nice and hot before adding the cheese,” he says. The hot liquid helps the cheese to melt and keeps it from clumping. Something else to be aware of is to watch how much fondue is left in the pot, and turn down the heat accordingly, which keeps the remaining fondue from scorching. While many cheese fondues call for cherry liqueur, you can substitute cranberry juice cocktail or another type of similar juice if you don’t want to use liqueur in the recipe.

“Fondue is endless and it’s really based upon your taste,” he says.

Scowden advocates using a double boiler to prepare cheese and chocolate fondues because he says it heats everything up more evenly and prevents burning.

If you find yourself craving fondue one evening, and have to have it right away, Bruno’s in West Lafayette has a great tasting cheese fondue on the menu. The restaurant is family owned, and the family is originally from Switzerland, says owner Orlando Itin. Itin’s father, who was born in Switzerland, was a baker by trade.

“Regarding the bread for the fondue, we do all of our own baking here on site, which is kind of unique,” he says. ✕



The Swiss cheese fondue at Bruno’s in West Lafayette features fresh baked bread for dipping. (Photo by Tom Baugues)

## fondue recipes

### Traditional Swiss Cheese Fondue (Brett Scowden, The Melting Pot)

- 3½ cups (14 ounces) shredded Swiss cheese
- 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup white wine
- 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped garlic
- 1 ounce cherry-flavored liqueur (Scowden recommends Kirschwasser)
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- Dash of grated nutmeg

Mix or toss the cheese with the flour in a bowl. Put a metal bowl over a saucepan filled with about two inches of water, or use a conventional double boiler. Use high heat to bring the water to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium, and then pour the white wine into the bowl. Stir in lemon juice and garlic and cook for 30 seconds while consistently stirring the mixture.

When the wine is hot, add half of the cheese, and keep stirring until the cheese is melted. Now add the remaining cheese a little at a time, while still stirring. Pour the cherry liqueur slowly around the edge of the bowl. Cook the mixture until the alcohol cooks off (about one minute). Stir in the pepper.

Transfer the contents into a heated fondue pot, and keep the fondue warm while serving under a low heat. Garnish with the nutmeg if you wish. More fondue recipes from The Melting Pot can be found online at [www.fonduefanatics.com](http://www.fonduefanatics.com).

### Shrimp in Spicy Garlic Beer Fondue (Hallie Harron, Not Your Mother’s Fondue)

- 1½ cups extra virgin olive oil
- 1 12-ounce bottle mild flavored beer
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 Tablespoon Cajun spice blend
- 1 Tablespoon soy sauce
- 1½ teaspoons lemon zest
- 3 to 5 drops hot sauce, to taste
- 1 lb. large raw shrimp, peeled and deveined

Heat the olive oil in a large fondue pot on low heat. Once the oil is warm, stir in the beer, garlic, lemon juice, Cajun spice blend, soy sauce and lemon zest. When the mixture simmers, cook it for another 10 minutes on low heat. At this point, Harron recommends tasting the fondue and seasoning it with the hot sauce to your liking.

Now you are ready to cook the shrimp. Place the skewers of shrimp in the fondue and cook them for three to four minutes until the shrimp are firm and cooked. Harron also suggests French bread cubes for dipping in addition to the shrimp.

### Caramel Rum Fondue (Hallie Harron, Not Your Mother’s Fondue)

- 2½ cups sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1¾ cups heavy cream
- 3 Tablespoons dark rum
- Pinch of sea salt

Put the sugar and water in a heavy saucepan and heat over medium-high heat to a boil. Cook until syrup caramelizes or turns an amber color for about 10 to 15 minutes. The syrup will thicken. Remove the mixture from the heat.

Gently stir in the cream, rum and salt. The mixture will instantly form large clumps of sugar. Heat the mixture again over low heat until the caramel is thick and the sugar clumps have dissolved. Transfer it all to a medium-size fondue pot and serve on the lowest heat setting. Harron suggests using tart apple wedges for dipping.