

7 Tips for a Successful Fondue Party

By Brette Sember | December 28, 2015 | 10:00am

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The More Pots the Merrier

While fondue pots come with six to eight forks, it's nearly impossible for that many people to share one pot, unless you are crowded around a very small round table. If you're at an oblong table, you need one pot for every four to five people, simply because it is too far too reach. Give each guest two forks: one for eating and one to leave in the pot for dunking (to avoid the dreaded double-dipping faux pas). It can be fun to make a different type of fondue in each pot (try a

traditional fondue made with Gruyere and one made with Brie, or go off the rails and do a non-cheese fondue of red sauce or one made of broth, soy sauce, ginger, scallion, rice wine, and hoisin). For dessert, make a traditional chocolate fondue and then do an additional one that is white chocolate or chocolate caramel.

Know Your Meat Safety

While cheese and chocolate fondues are popular, cooking raw meat and seafood in boiling liquid (such as broth) or hot oil is another traditional type of fondue. This type of fondue requires extra precautions. Do not use a ceramic fondue pot for this, since it cannot withstand the heat. You need one utensil that is only used for moving raw meat into the pot. The eating utensils should never touch the raw meat. Likewise, the raw meat should never touch the plates guests eat from. Meat has to be cooked to the correct temperature to be safe to eat, so [check this FDA chart](#) for details.

Hot Pot

Wondering what type of heat to use? Pots that use gel fuel or fuel packets (such as Sterno) stay at a low, controlled temperature. Electric pots tend to get too hot for cheese and chocolate (you'll find yourself plugging and unplugging, plus the cords do get in the way) but may be ideal for boiling liquid or heating oil for cooking raw meat. Metal pots hold heat and are good for cooking meat. Ceramic pots are good for cheese and chocolate, which can burn if exposed to high heat. No matter what kind of pot you use, it's always easier to make your fondue on the stove and then transfer to the fondue pots because they don't get hot enough for efficient cooking.

Manage the Mess

The fun of a fondue party is that there's lots of food and lots of options. This can translate to a cluttered table. Serve your food in stages, starting with vegetables and fruits, moving on to meats and breads, and doing your dessert fondue last. For easiest clean up, give your guests small disposable plates, so they can get a fresh one whenever necessary and to reduce the diameter of space needed in front of them.

Fondue Fridge Clean-Out

For years we did a fondue party on New Year's Eve, and it was an opportunity for me to clean out my fridge and freezer after holiday excess. All of your holiday leftovers are perfect fodder for fondue: ham, bread, cherry tomatoes, leftovers from fruit baskets and fruit plates, cooked shrimp, all the cookies you didn't eat, cocktail meatballs, sausage, smoked turkey, breadsticks, and the odds and ends of vegetables that aren't enough to use on their own but when combined make a great veggie platter for fondue.

Perfect Prepping

Getting ready for your fondue party requires planning, because there are so many things you need to cut up into small pieces. You can chop everything in advance, but be sure to refrigerate meats and produce and tightly cover any bread, cake, or cookies so they don't get stale. Then all you need to do at the last minute is make the fondues themselves. You can easily run out of platters for serving, so use baskets for breads and cakes and bowls for things like meatballs and berries. Traditional fondues are served with side sauces, so be sure to make those ahead (consider

chimichurri, sweet chili sauce, honey mustard sauce or horseradish cream).

Dazzle with Extras

In addition to side sauces, you can wow your guests with a few added items. Chopped fresh herbs, real crushed bacon, or crushed potato chips are a fun extra for guests to top morsels with. For your dessert course, pass around small bowls of sprinkles, mini white chocolate chips, chopped nuts, or sea salt for guests to add to their bites.

Brette Sember is the author of [The Original Muffin Tin Cookbook](#), available as a Kindle. Her website is [BretteSember.com](#).

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