

# MEN'S JOURNAL

FOOD & DRINK

## How to Build the Perfect Grilled Cheese



Grilled cheese, quite possibly the ultimate comfort food, is largely enjoyed by those who give in to pleasure and sinful indulgence, without pretense or taking themselves too seriously. Those are character traits that can serve us well in another area of life: Research has indicated [a lover of grilled cheese tends to enjoy a better sex life.](#)

"The type of people who make, order and love grilled cheese are the same type of person who doesn't take themselves too seriously. People who don't take themselves too seriously are often dynamite in the sack. This is a fact because I take nothing seriously and I love grilled cheese," says [Sandwich King Jeff Mauro](#) of Food Network's *The Kitchen*. Sounds about right.

If the domain of our sex lives becomes dependent on simply enjoying more of an equally sexy sandwich, we're all about doing it right.

## **Heat control**

The secret to a great grilled cheese is heat control, says Mauro. "First, never just plop down butter onto a hot pan, this will cause the butter to burn. Spread your bread evenly with salted butter (crust to crust is must!). Second, heat up a quality, heavy, non-stick pan to only medium heat," says Mauro. Third, the time-tested diner trick of "domeing" with a metal bowl is also a must, Mauro says. This promotes even heating giving you that perfect blend of gooey centers and golden brown exteriors.

## **Pay attention to proportions**

"One mistake I see a lot in the sandwich world is a lack of consideration when it comes proportions," says **Stephen Cusato**, a food stylist and recipe developer formerly of FOODfreaks, a specialty grilled cheese vendor in New York City. This means if your bread is cut too thick, or if you have too much or too little cheese, you run the risk of drowning out all the flavors you're trying to achieve, says Cusato. "Paying attention to this helps craft a better sandwich, one where all the ingredients don't instantly fall out of the back upon first bite. Making sure there is the right amount of each ingredient, cut the right way, assembled in a particular order, that to me is what sets a sandwich apart," says Cusato.

Obviously, all the ingredients, regardless of proportions should be quality. "Even a novice palate can taste the difference between a good cheese and a bad cheese, good quality bread versus bad. So by finding the best bread you can, or the bread you like best and going to your favorite cheese shop and getting the a full flavored cheddar or whatever you are looking for, you're well on your way to a good sandwich," says Cusato.

## **Cheese**

When enjoying grilled cheese, the cheese is clearly the star of the show. Your sexiest sandwich will likely involve your favorite cheese. "You want to choose a semi-hard cheese, because if the cheese is too soft, it will just ooze out of the sides of the bread when you bite into it," says Chef Craig Kuhns from Nose Dive, **a gastropub in Greenville, SC**. This is one of the reasons that cheeses like cheddar and Swiss are so popular for grilled cheese. The ideal bread will complement your chosen cheese. Make sure you don't pick bread that's too thick –remember your proportions. You want to have a nice bread/cheese ratio.