

Cheese Us

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Fig & Citrus Jam with Brie & Manchego Holiday Pairing

Ingredients

Serves 4–6 as an appetizer.

Fig, Orange & Balsamic Jam

- 1½ lbs fresh figs, stems removed and chopped (about 5 cups)
- 2 medium oranges
 - Zest of both oranges
 - Juice of 1–1½ oranges (about ¼–½ cup juice)
- 1–1¼ cups sugar (start with 1 cup; add more to taste if figs aren't very sweet)
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- ¼ tsp salt
- (Optional) ¼ tsp ground cinnamon or a tiny splash of vanilla extract

Cheese & Simple Accompaniments

- 8 oz Brie or triple-crème cheese (1 small wheel or wedge)
- 8 oz Manchego or other aged sheep's milk cheese
- 1 small baguette or bolillo, sliced and lightly toasted
- 1 cup plain crackers (water crackers or multigrain)

(Optional)

- ¼ cup toasted nuts (walnuts or pecans) for extra crunch

Make the Fig, Orange & Balsamic Jam

1. Prep the fruit

- Rinse the figs, remove the stems, and chop into small pieces.
- Zest both oranges into a small bowl.
- Juice 1–1½ oranges to get about ¼–½ cup of juice, straining out any seeds.

2. Combine ingredients in a saucepan

- In a medium, heavy-bottomed saucepan, add the chopped figs, orange zest, orange juice, sugar, balsamic vinegar, and salt.
- If using, add the cinnamon or vanilla.

3. Cook the jam

- Place the pan over medium heat and stir to combine.
- As the mixture warms, the figs will release their juices. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.

4. Simmer until thick and jammy

- Once the mixture begins to bubble, reduce the heat to low.
- Simmer for about 15–20 minutes, stirring every few minutes and gently smashing some of the figs with the back of a spoon.

- The jam is ready when it looks glossy, thick, and holds its shape on the spoon. If it seems too runny, cook a few minutes longer; if it's too thick, add 1–2 tablespoons of water.

5. **Taste and adjust**

- Carefully taste a small spoonful (it will be hot).
- Add a bit more sugar if you'd like it sweeter, or an extra splash of balsamic if you want more tang and depth.
- Stir and cook 1–2 more minutes after any adjustments.

6. **Cool the jam**

- Remove from heat and let the jam cool to room temperature in the pot.
- Transfer to a clean jar or small bowl. It will thicken more as it cools.

Prepare the Cheeses & Accompaniments

1. Take the Brie out of the refrigerator 20–30 minutes before serving so it can soften.
2. Slice the Manchego into thin wedges.
3. Slice and lightly toast the baguette, and arrange with crackers on a small platter or board.

Plate & Pair

1. Place the Brie and Manchego on a board or platter with the jar or bowl of fig–orange–balsamic jam in the center.
2. Arrange the toasted baguette slices, crackers, and toasted nuts (if using) around the cheeses.
3. To enjoy, spread a little jam on a piece of bread or cracker and top with a slice of Brie for a rich, creamy pairing, or with Manchego for a slightly nutty, savory contrast.