

Baked Mont d'Or (David Lebovitz)

Four servings

Mont d'Or is a special experience and if you find one that's perfectly ripe, you can just spoon it out of the container without heating it. However baking the cheese brings out its special flavor, especially if you add garlic and a splash of wine, and the texture is like nothing else you've ever had. Some folks grind some black pepper over the cheese before baking as well.

If you find one where the wooded box is glued rather than stapled, use a sturdy clip to clasp the box firmly closed during the baking. (And be careful removing it if it's made of metal, since it'll be hot.) Outside of Europe, it can be difficult to find. I've given a few sources and tips below if you want to try to track one down.

1 Mont d'Or cheese, room temperature
1 clove garlic, peeled and thinly sliced
1/4 cup (60ml) white wine

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C.)

2. Wrap the container of cheese securely in foil, making sure to enclose it so the foil goes up to the top of the outside of the container, but leave the top exposed. Set the wrapped cheese on a baking sheet.

3. Poke eight-to-ten slits in the top of the cheese with a paring knife and slide the slivers of fresh garlic in them. Pour white wine over the cheese, and bake the cheese until it's very hot – it will take between 20 and 30 minutes.

Serve with good bread, although some people like to boil up some new potatoes and make a full meal out of it, often including slices of ham. Pair it with a good, flavorful white wine (such as Arbois, Chasselas, Sancerre, Chardonnay, or Gewürtztraminer), Champagne, or beer.

<http://www.davidlebovitz.com/2013/03/vacherin-mont-dor-cheese-fromage/>

Mont d'Or chaud (Joan's Recipe)

Serves 4 as a main dish.

1 medium box of Mont d'Or
2 cloves garlic, peeled and halved
1/2 cup vin jaune (a sweet white wine from the Jura; an alternative could be sherry)
salt and pepper
1 kilogram (about 2¼ pounds) baby potatoes (preferably *ratte* potatoes, such as **la ratte du Touquet**)
a selection of charcuterie, such as dried sausage and mountain ham (optional)
fresh bread

1. Preheat oven to a medium temperature (350°F/180°C).
2. Put a large pot of water over high heat and boil the baby potatoes until easily pierced with a fork. Drain and set aside, covered.
3. Cut 3 layers of aluminum foil twice as large as the Mont d'Or box itself. Place the box in the middle and bring the edges of the aluminum foil tightly up and around the sides of the box.
4. Remove the lid and make three or four small holes in the cheese with a knife. Nestle the halved garlic into these holes. Pour the vin jaune over the top of the cheese until covered; don't worry if it leaks out the bottom of the box (the multiple layers of aluminum foil will help contain it!). Sprinkle with salt and pepper, replace the lid and bring the edges of the aluminum foil over the top to seal.
5. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes.
6. Prepare a platter with the selection of charcuterie, if serving.
7. Unwrap the foil from the top of the box, open the lid and check that the cheese is fully melted. Return to the oven for a few more minutes if necessary.
8. Serve immediately by placing the box directly on the table, accompanied by the boiled baby potatoes, cured meats and fresh bread. Guests can use spoons to drizzle the melted cheese over their plate of potatoes, but it can also be eaten as a fondue, by dipping chunks of potato or bread directly into the box with a fork.

Additional Notes

- It is possible to buy wedges of Mont d'Or from your cheesemonger, but for this recipe it is essential to purchase the Mont d'Or in the round box, as the cheese will be cooked *inside* the box. Good cheesemongers will have different-size boxes available for different numbers of guests.
- Also, if you have a fireplace, go ahead and place the aluminum-wrapped box in the coals to cook. It may take a little longer to cook, as you can't gauge the temperature as easily. There's nothing like it, however, and the smell that fills that house will be irresistible!