

Parmesan-Reggiano in the “Raw”



Plan Z Phase: This is a Z3 (ZReboot) recipe. There's only one ingredient in this recipe. The success is in the quality and the presentation. Cooking rookies and gourmets in a hurry can't beat this one for ease. I've been to several Italian restaurants lately that seem to have “discovered” Parmesan-reggiano cheese—only this time they aren't grating it on your pasta; they are serving it as a pre-appetizer. An *amuse bouce* some would call it. My theory is that it makes a great cocktail hour treat for the guests and takes a huge burden off the party host.

Servings: 8 servings

Ingredients:

- Parmesan-Reggiano cheese (approx. 1 pound wedge)

Instructions: All you need to do is go to your local cheese purveyor—a good one—someone like Whole Foods. Ask for a chunk of their best Parmesan reggiano cut right off the wheel. You'll be assured of freshness this way, but be nice and order enough to make it worth it to the cheese seller to cut it off the wheel. A pound or so will do it. It's expensive but worth it. I ask for it by making the wedge shape and size I want with my hand and they get the idea.

The second secret is the display. Find a cool tray/platter in your collection. It needs to be something you don't mind people cutting on. I have a metal one that is in the shape of a triangle with bumps on it that shine under the lights and just makes the cheese look fancier. Rustic works great too. Use a sharp cutter. A cheese knife with that little forked end is best, but otherwise a sharp knife will do. Don't use a cheese planer. Start off the cutting so your guests will get the idea. We are not talking shavings here. We are attempting to cut the cheese in "baby-blocks"—think of the size of sugar cubes. Don't get too picky. Just don't make them too small. The idea is to kind of suck on the pieces while you sip your drink. It's amazing. You never knew how good a good Parmesan cheese could taste until you serve it this way with your favorite cocktail or a wonderful glass of wine. Sure beats that stuff my dad sprinkled out of the green can onto his spaghetti! Oh, by the way, if you don't eat it all in the one sitting, the cheese will keep its flavor for up to a month if you wrap it tightly and keep it refrigerated. It's also decadent grated or shaved on other things like salads or bruschetta, so don't forget it's in the refrigerator.

Enjoy!

Cheers,