



Appetizers

Cheddar Cheese Coins

Makes at least 7 dozen



Photo by Paul Body

You'll find these buttery cheddar biscuits irresistible with sparkling wine or any wine for that matter. They're also a good stand-in for croutons and quite addictive on their own. I always keep logs of this dough in my freezer so I can whip these out on short notice.

1 pound butter, softened
1 pound sharp cheddar cheese, grated and at room temperature
4 cups unbleached flour
2 cups pecans, toasted and chopped
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon cayenne
½ teaspoon ancho chile powder
½ teaspoon piment d'Espelette

From Maria C. Hunt, author of *The Bubbly Bar: Champagne & Sparkling Wine Cocktails for Every Occasion* (Clarkson Potter, \$16.99). For more information on entertaining and cocktail recipes, visit www.thebubblygirl.com

In a large mixing bowl, add the butter, cheddar cheese, flour, pecans, salt, cayenne, ancho chile powder and piment d'Espelette. Using your hands, mix well until all the ingredients are well combined and it forms a dough.

Working on a lightly floured surface, take a hunk of dough and roll it into a 10 to 12 inch long log the diameter of a quarter. Wrap log in plastic wrap. Repeat with the remaining dough. Put the dough you don't plan to bake into the freezer, stored in a resealable plastic bag. Let the dough you plan to bake chill in the refrigerator for an hour or two.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Using a sharp knife, slice the chilled log of dough into discs one-eighth inch thick. Place discs ¼ inch apart on a baking sheet that's been greased lightly or is covered by a Silpat baking mat. Bake for 15 to 17 minutes, until the coins are golden and the kitchen smells like toasty cheddar cheese and butter. Remove pan from the oven. Let the coins cool completely before removing them from the pan, or they might fall apart.