

Goat Cheese Toasts

Goat cheese toasts make excellent hors d'oeuvres or garnishes for a salad. I like the small Bûcheron goat cheese, which is about 1 3/4 inches in diameter, or any other soft, creamy, and mild goat cheese of about the same size. Montrachet is also a very good imported chèvre, or goat cheese. Combining the cheese with a little herbes de Provence or Italian seasoning and some slivered garlic adds complexity. The toasts can be assembled and toasted at the last minute.

Preheat the broiler. Cut as many 1/4-inch slices from a baguette as you need for serving. Arrange the slices side by side on a baking sheet. Cut enough 1/4-inch-thick slices from a tubelike container of goat cheese (dental floss is good for slicing the cheese) for each of the bread rounds. Press a slice of cheese on each slice of bread, taking care to cover the entire surface of the bread so it doesn't burn under the broiler. Sprinkle a small amount of herbes de Provence on each toast and a bit of freshly ground black pepper. Using a vegetable peeler, remove thin slices from a large peeled garlic clove and press 1 sliver in the center of the cheese on each toast. Sprinkle each toast with a few drops of olive oil. Slide the toasts under the broiler, so they are 4 to 5 inches from the heat source, for about 2 minutes, or until the tops are bubbly, hot, and lightly browned. Arrange the toasts on a serving platter. Cool for about 5 minutes before serving.