

The perfect party recipe

Parmesan & Black Pepper Biscuits



These buttery, savoury biscuits are packed with the rich, nutty flavour of Parmesan and a warming kick of black pepper and cayenne, perfect as a nibble with drinks or alongside a cheeseboard but it is a real show-stopper as a fresh basil pesto and cucumber canape!

For the Parmesan Biscuits

Ingredients (makes 30 biscuits)

- 150g plain flour
- 150g grated Parmesan
- 125g salted butter
- 1.5 tsp coarse ground pepper
- 1 pinch of cayenne pepper

Method

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180c. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 2 In a food processor, pulse all of the ingredients until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
- 3 Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface, knead briefly, then roll into a log shape, approximately 4cm in diameter. Wrap in cling film and chill for half an hour.
- 4 Alternatively roll out evenly between 2 sheets of baking paper and chill, cut out with a cookie cutter of your choice.
- 5 Once chilled, slice the log into 5mm thick rounds and place on the prepared baking sheet.
- 6 Bake for 10-12 minutes or until golden and crisp.
- 7 Allow to cool on a wire rack before serving.

I make my dough and freeze it, that way you can pop it out of the freezer and bake in no time at all, perfect for when you have unexpected guests! These are delicious on their own with a glass of champagne or topped with a slice of manchego with a drizzle of honey, or even crumbled over a hot bowl of soup for that added crunch, but to make them extra special I would recommend gorgeous fresh basil pesto and a sliver of cucumber for the perfect canape.

For the Fresh Basil Pesto

This vibrant, homemade pesto is packed with the fresh flavours of basil, Parmesan and toasted pine nuts. It's quick and easy and tastes nothing like the store bought jars, its pretty much delicious on anything! I add the cream cheese to stabilise the pesto so it doesn't drip off the biscuit, a little dash of water makes it creamy and delicious.

Ingredients

- 60g fresh basil leaves (about 2 large handfuls)
- 60g pine nuts, lightly toasted
- 1 small garlic clove, crushed
- 100g Good Quality Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- 100ml extra virgin olive oil for pesto or 2 tbsp cream and a drizzle of oil for canapés
- Freshly ground black pepper
- A splash of water

Method

- 1 Toast the pine nuts in a dry pan over medium heat for 1-2 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally until they turn golden and fragrant. Let them cool slightly.
- 2 In a food processor, blend the basil, pine nuts, garlic, Parmesan, salt and pepper until finely chopped and resembles a thick paste.
- 3 I sometimes freeze the pesto at this point.
- 4 Taste and check for seasoning, tip into a jar and then add the oil if using as a pesto.
- 5 If using as a canape, add the cream cheese and mix well, this will help it hold together on top of your Parmesan biscuit, check for seasoning once more.

The Canape

To assemble your canape, spoon or pipe a generous dollop of the pesto onto the biscuit, using a potato peeler, peel long ribbon of cucumber and wrap around you finger to make a perfect circle, pop onto the pesto and decorate with an edible flower, delicious!

