

## PIZZA POPPERS

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This will be, what, popper recipe #7? AND I still have more recipes to try on my list. This one is DEFINITELY not vegan. I'm starting to think that not only did I need a separate popper section, but a whole separate popper book!

### INGREDIENTS

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<b>Qty.</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Item</b>
16	-----	Largish / Good Sized Jalapenos
2	16 oz. pack	Regular Cut Bacon
1	8 oz. pack	Cream Cheese
1/2	Cup	Shredded Parmesan
1/2	Cup	Shredded Mozzarella or Mozzarella / Provolone Mix
12	TBSP	Pizza Sauce of Choice
1	TBSP	Tabasco
1	Clove	Garlic
1	12 oz.	Stick Pepperoni

I am still on the Kunzler tip as far as bacon goes

Cream cheese has GOT to be regular ol' Philli!

Insert general disclaimer about pre-shredded cheese here

I used Classico Pizza Sauce (Regular). It was most of a 14 oz. BY WEIGHT jar. I like this stuff, but maybe one day I'll try this with my custom sauce

I don't have any strong opinions about stick pepperoni at this point. I generally grab Hormel for the sliced stuff and I find that quite tasty. The Dietz-Watson stick pepperoni I used for this last round was also pretty tasty.

Quick side note about the Tabasco... I have taken to picking up the big bottles when I see them. They are not always there when I need them

### SPECIAL TOOLS

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- Food Saver (or similar vacuum sealer) [i]
- Vacuum seal bags or bag rolls [i]
- Traeger Pellet Grill with Mesquite Pellets[ii]
- Copper Crispers [iii]

## FILLING PREPARATION

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- 1) Dice the pepperoni and set aside
  - a. Slice along the short axis into not too thin, not too thick slices. Maybe about 1/8 inch or thereabouts
  - b. Slice the slices into strips
  - c. Slice the strips into diced
  - d. Go over once or twice more to get a small dice
- 2) Mince the clove of garlic and set aside
- 3) Measure out the shredded mozz and parm
- 4) Slice then dice the cream cheese [v]
- 5) Place the cream cheese into a glass bowl
- 6) Add the pepperoni, shredded cheese, and garlic then mix with a wood spoon
- 7) Spread over the Tabasco
- 8) Mix in the pizza sauce 2 TBSP at a time [vi]
- 9) Cover the bowl with plastic wrap, pressing down on to the mix so that there are no large air pockets
- 10) Put the mix into the fridge until needed (OVERNIGHT WORKS WELL TOO!!!)

## POPPER PREPARATION

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- 1) Rinse the jalapenos and pat dry
- 2) Remove the stems, but be careful not to remove the stem root; if we do this, the filling will leak out!
- 3) Slice the jalapenos in half length-wise
- 4) Scope out the ribs and seeds with the 1/8 TSP metal measuring spoon and set aside. Make sure to NOT remove the stem base so that the filling will not drain out
- 5) Put jalapenos in fridge, uncovered, until needed later
- 6) Put the ribs and seeds in a separate container and put in the fridge. These will not be used for this recipe, but can be used for something else
- 7) Pull the Traeger out on your deck and fill with your pellets of choice [vii]
- 8) Set the Traeger to smoke with the lid open
- 9) Once you see smoke, close the lid and set to 250 deg. F
- 10) Fill each pepper half with the mix so that it is mounded a little bit above the top of the pepper half
- 11) Place each filled pepper half on a cooling rack in a correspondingly sized sheet pan. DON'T CROWD!!!
- 12) Wrap each pepper half in bacon such that the entire pepper is wrapped with a single layer with overlapping edges. You don't want to be able to see the filling. If the bacon is too long for the pepper, fold the remaining length of bacon so that it lays on top of the popper
- 13) If you are not going to make all the poppers, vacuum seal the left overs and put in freezer. Tupperware and wax paper is fine if you are going to make the rest in the next day or so

- 14) Cook until the bacon is nice and crispy, about 2 ½ hours. Start checking around the 2 hour mark to see how they are doing, but remember, “If you’re looking, you ain’t cooking” [viii]
- 15) Pull the poppers inside and let rest for at least 5 minutes
- 16) Plate and...
- 17) ENJOY!!!

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## NOTES

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- i. The vacuum sealer is GREAT for storing leftover bacon. Keeps it much fresher with no gray development like you might get in a regular old zip top bag
- ii. If you don’t have a Traeger or the like, you can use the oven. You will, however, miss out on that great smoke flavor.
- iii. Are these really necessary? Well, no, but I bought a couple a while back and found them very useful for this type of stuff. A half sheet cooling rack in a half sheet pan will work just as well
- iv. Either Mesquite or Hickory works well here
- v. It really helps to oil your knife for this. Nothing fancy, nothing strong, just some type of oil to grease the knife
- vi. Want more? Want less? Play it by ear! Taste as you mix. Just be careful about letting the overall mix getting too thin
- vii. Either Mesquite or Hickory works well here
- viii. If it looks like the poppers are not cooking evenly, rotate and swap pans occasionally

PICTURES













