

## STEAK AND CHEESE POPPERS (WIP)

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Well, that tears it. This is my fourth poppers recipe (not to mention that I have a few more on deck), so I guess I have to make a section dedicated to poppers. This one is good, very good, but not quite where I want it to be, so I am classifying it as a WIP. I also need to work on quantities. I am writing this as I made it, but here are some ideas for next time

- After dice the steak, give the steak cubes a final quick sear to get a bit more of that tasty maillard reaction goodness
- Bump up the steak cubes from 1 cup to 2 cups
- Change jalapenos from by weight to number of poppers (e.g. 16 good size jalapeno peppers)
- Microplane the garlic. No particular reason, I just want to give it a try

### INGREDIENTS

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<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Item</u>
1 1/2	Lbs	Jalapeno Peppers
2	16 oz. Pack	Regular Cut Bacon
1	4 oz. Container	Crumbled Blue Cheese
1	8 oz. Pack	Cream Cheese
1	-----	Sweet Onion
2	Cloves	Garlic
2	TSP	Black Pepper
1/2	TSP	Kosher Salt
1	-----	London Broil Steak
AR	-----	Grapeseed Oil (or any neutral oil with a high smoke point)

I used “Salemville Smokehaus Blue – Blue Cheese Crumbles” again. I have not done a comparison across brands, but I really like this one. Quite tasty!

I like Kunzler bacon, with the Hormel Black Label being a close second

Why London broil for the steak? I wanted something with not too high of a fat content because I already have plenty from the cheese and such

2 cloves makes it pretty garlicky. If that is not your thing, bump it down to 1

## 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]

## 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) Heat your trusty cast iron pan on VERY HI until rippin' hot (about 5 – 10 minutes) [iv]
- 8) Pat the london broil dry with paper towels
- 9) Slice the london broil in half with the grain
- 10) Apply oil all over both pieces of steak and set one aside
- 11) Sear the steak 15 seconds
- 12) Flip and sear for 15 seconds
- 13) Repeat steps 11 and 12 until you have a nice crust
- 14) Sear the edge of the steak 15 seconds
- 15) Flip to the next edge and sear for 15 seconds
- 16) Repeat steps 14 and 15 for all edges, except for the cut side, until you have a nice crust
- 17) Repeat steps 11 – 16 for the second half of the London broil
- 18) Slice the steak into ~1/4 slices parallel to the first cut
- 19) Sear the slices in batches (DON'T CROWD) flipping every 15 seconds until you have a nice crust. De-gunk the pan and add oil as necessary
- 20) Dice the steak slices into 1/4 cubes
- 21) Measure out 1 cup of the diced steak and set aside. Put the rest in a Tupperware container in the fridge
- 22) Rinse, pat dry, then finely dice the onion [v]
- 23) Measure out 1/2 cup of the onion and set aside. Put the rest in a Tupperware container in the fridge
- 24) Mince the garlic and set aside
- 25) Slice the cream cheese into thin strips
- 26) Pull the slices apart into bits and spread evenly along the bottom of a large glass bowl in a single layer
- 27) Spread the steak cubes over the cream cheese
- 28) Spread the diced onion over the steak

- 29) Spread the blue cheese crumbles over the onion
- 30) Sprinkle over the minced garlic
- 31) Sprinkle over the salt and pepper
- 32) Gently mix everything with a wood spoon until well incorporated
- 33) Pull the Traeger out on your deck and fill with your pellets of choice [vi]
- 34) Set the Traeger to smoke with the lid open
- 35) Once you see smoke, close the lid and set to 250 deg. F
- 36) For each pepper half
  - a. Fill with the steak and cheese mix so that it is mounded a little bit above the top of the pepper half
  - b. Wrap 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
  - c. Place on Copper Crisper. DON'T CROWD THE PEPPERS!
- 37) 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
- 38) Place the poppers in the Traeger
- 39) 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"
- 40) Pull the poppers inside and let rest for at least 5 minutes
- 41) Plate and...
- 42) ENJOY!!!

## 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. Make sure your exhaust fans are on and windows are open (if possible)
- v. I tried the dicing technique that you see all over the internet these days. I need to work on this a bit, but it seemed to work well
- vi. I started with Mesquite, but the hopper was running low, so I topped it off with Hickory

PICTURES















