

# DAVID LEBOVITZ

## Baked Camembert with Oven-Roasted Grapes

4-6 Appetizer-sized servings

Outside of France, and even within, a variety of cheeses are called “Camembert,” as well as Brie. The best in France are [Camembert du Normandie](#), [Brie de Meaux](#), and its lesser-known cousin, [Brie de Melun](#), although other cheeses are generically called Camembert and Brie.

The Camembert I used here was 8.8 ounces (250g), but if your cheese is larger, just increase the cooking time to suit it. It’s ready when it feels very warm and liquidy when you touch it on the top, in the center. While I do say this is an appetizer, we’ve had it for dinner with a big salad and a baguette, to smear the warm cheese and grapes on.

This recipe makes a few more grapes than you’ll need, but they’re really good on ice cream or in a bowl of yogurt with a spoonful of the liquid. Wine grapes have the best flavor, such as muscats, but they also come with seeds. Ditto with Concord grapes. Feel free to use grapes with seeds or grapes *sans pépins* (seedless). Note that the darker varieties of grapes will have the richest color and flavor.

3/4 cup (180ml) red wine (or grape or apple juice with a little squeeze of lemon juice)

2 tablespoons honey

1-2 tablespoons dark brown sugar

1 1/2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar (not the [premium, aged](#) kind)

1 pound (450g) red- or dark-skinned grapes, still on their stems, if desired

One 8- to 9-ounce (250g) Camembert, at room temperature

Optional: 1/4 cup (30g) toasted hazelnuts, skins rubbed off and very coarsely chopped

Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).

Pour the red wine into a small baking dish that will hold the grapes in a single layer, with not a lot of room around them. Stir in the honey, brown sugar, and vinegar. Place the bunches of grapes in the dish, gently turning them over a few times to get them coated with the liquid. (You can also vary things by adding sprigs of thyme, orange peel, a little rosemary, or black pepper to the mix, as shown in one of the photos.)

Roast the grapes in the oven, turning them over once, midway through baking, until they are soft and cooked through, about 45 minutes. Depending on the type of grapes, they may take more or less time, so start checking them at the 30-minute mark.

Remove the grapes from the oven and reduce the temperature of the oven to 375°F (190°C).

Remove the Camembert from the box and any packaging, and place the cheese in a small baking dish. I use a small gratin dish, but an ovenproof skillet or small baking sheet lined with parchment paper will work as well. (Just keep an eye on it during baking if using a baking sheet as sometimes the cheese may run out of the bottom.)

Bake the cheese for 10 to 12 minutes, until it feels very warm and liquidy in the center.

Remove from oven and top with bunches of grapes, spooning the flavorful liquid generously over the top. Scatter the nuts over the top, if using.

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