

Salt and Serenity

Killer Grilled Cheese Sandwiches

Serves 4

¼ cup champagne or white wine vinegar

¼ cup water

1 Tablespoon Kosher salt

1 teaspoon white sugar

2 shallots, peeled and thinly sliced into rings

8 slices rye bread

8 ounces thinly sliced good melting cheese (I used a combo of Cheddar, Fontina and Gruyere)

4 teaspoons Dijon mustard

1 tart apple, cored and thinly sliced (no need to peel)

¼ cup softened unsalted butter

1 teaspoon Kosher salt (optional)

1. **Make pickled shallots:** In a small bowl, whisk together vinegar, water, salt and sugar. Add shallots and let sit for about 30 minutes. Drain shallots and set aside. Discard pickling liquid. (This will make more than you need. They keep well in an airtight container in the fridge for about a week. Use them up in grain salads, or on top of grilled beef or chicken.)
2. **Build the sandwiches:** Spread 4 slices with Dijon mustard. Distribute half the cheese over the mustard layer. Top with some pickled shallots, and a layer of thinly sliced apples. Top with remaining half of cheese. Top each sandwich with second slice of bread. Butter the outside of each sandwich with the softened butter, taking care to spread the butter right to the edge of each slice. Sprinkle the buttered bread lightly with Kosher salt.
3. Heat a large cast iron or other heavy pan on medium-low heat. Add sandwiches (you may need to do this in 2 batches, depending on the size of your pan.) Cover pan with lid to help the cheese melt. Let sandwich cook on first side until golden brown, about 2-3 minutes. Flip and cook on second side, until the outside is deeply golden brown and the cheese is thoroughly melted.
4. Slice and eat.