

SMOKED · MEDIUM

Cold-Smoked Cheese on the Kamado with a Pellet Tube, No Charcoal Lit

A closed kamado, cold and without a single charcoal ember: just a tube of apple pellets smouldering without flame and three cheeses taking on smoke for hours while the dome stays below 25 °C.



PREP

30 min

COOK

180 min

SERVINGS

8

TEMPERATURE

20 °C

Ingredients

400 g semi-cured manchego, in a wedge about 3 cm thick

300 g block mozzarella (the pizza kind, not fresh mozzarella in brine)

1 ud sheet of baking paper, if the grate has traces of grease

1 ud country loaf (pan de pueblo or hogaza), to serve

100 g shelled walnuts

400 g young gouda in a block, wax coating removed (if it has one)

1 ud tube filled to the top with 100% apple pellets, 6 mm, dry

1 ud roll of cling film or waxed paper, for wrapping

150 g membrillo (quince paste)

2 cda rosemary honey

Method

1 PICK THE MORNING AND MEASURE

This recipe starts with a thermometer, not a fire. Lay one of the CIRYCASE's two probes on the grate of the closed kamado as an ambient probe and wait five minutes: if it reads below 20 °C, you have room; between 20 and 25 °C it can be done, with an eye on it; above 25 °C, it is not the day. On the Costa Blanca that means mornings in autumn, winter or early spring, and first thing. Set the thermometer's timer to 30 minutes.

2 DRY THE CHEESE

Take the cheeses out of the fridge 30-60 minutes ahead and leave them uncovered on a kitchen rack somewhere cool. A cold cheese put into a smoky chamber condenses water on its surface, and that damp film traps smoke unevenly and bitterly. Cut the gouda and the mozzarella into blocks 3-4 cm thick; leave the manchego as a wedge but strip its rind if it is paraffin or plastic-coated, since it neither takes smoke nor gets eaten. Pat everything dry with kitchen paper just before it goes in.

3 PREPARE THE CHAMBER, NO CHARCOAL

Clear the ash from the basket and leave the charcoal grate empty: not a single briquette goes into this recipe. Fit the clean cooking grate; if it still holds grease from a previous cook, put a piece of baking paper the size of each cheese under it, without covering the whole grate, which would cut off the smoke from below. Open the Kamado Bono's bottom vent a centimetre and the top one halfway: with no fire, that small draught is enough for the smoke to circulate rather than stagnate.

4 LOAD AND LIGHT THE TUBE

Fill the Naisfei tube to the top with the apple pellets and tap it a few times so they settle. Aim the Campingaz torch at the open end for 45-60 seconds, until the first pellets burn with a live flame. Stand the tube upright on a non-flammable surface, outside the kamado, and let it flame for 10 minutes: the ember needs that time to bed in so it does not go out once it is inside the chamber.

5 PUT THE FLAME OUT BEFORE IT GOES IN

Blow on the flame until it disappears and check that the end is left with a red ember and thin smoke, no fire. This step separates cold smoke from melted cheese: a tube with a flame inside the ceramic is a real heat source, and the ceramic holds that heat. Pick it up with a glove or tongs and lay it on the empty charcoal grate at the bottom, off to one side and away from the cheese. Close the dome and check that smoke leaves the top.

6 PLACE THE CHEESE AND CLOSE

Spread the cheeses over the clean grate with at least 3 cm between pieces, so the smoke washes every face, and leave the CIRYCASE ambient probe at cheese height without touching it. Close the dome. For the first 10 minutes the smoke should leave the top vent thin and bluish; if it comes out white and dense, open the bottom vent a little more to give the tube air and wait for it to clear.

7 CHECK EVERY 30 MINUTES

Each time the timer goes, look at two things without opening up: the ambient probe reading and the colour of the smoke leaving the top. Above 25 °C, open the dome fully, let the chamber come back down to air temperature and close it again. If the smoke stops, take the tube out with a glove or tongs: refill it if the pellets have burnt through, relight it with the torch and repeat the flame step outside the kamado. At the one-hour mark, turn each piece over with clean hands.

8 TAKE THEM OUT IN TURN

The mozzarella comes out at 2 hours: it is the softest and the first to saturate. The gouda and the manchego hold for between 2 and a half and 3 hours, depending on how strong you want the result. Colour guides you as much as the clock: an even golden tone, no dark patches. Move the cheeses to a kitchen rack and leave them in the air, somewhere cool, for 1 hour, so the surface dries and loses its acrid edge.

9 WRAP AND REST

Wrap each piece separately in cling film or waxed paper, pressed tight with no air pockets, label it with the date and put it in the fridge. The cheese needs several days of rest for the surface smoke to migrate inwards; opening it the same day only shows you the bitter layer. To serve, take it out 30 minutes ahead, slice it thinly and set it out with the bread, the membrillo, the walnuts and a thread of honey.

Editor's tips

- Start with the young gouda if this is your first time: it is the easiest to find in any supermarket, the most forgiving in texture and the one that best shows the difference between 2 and 3 hours of smoke.
- Dry pellets or nothing: a pellet that has taken on moisture swells, burns badly and gives white smoke. Keep the BBQ-Toro bag sealed and indoors, not next to the kamado.
- Do not open the dome to have a look outside the 30-minute checks: every opening empties the chamber of smoke, and you have to wait for it to fill again before the cheese carries on taking flavour.
- Coarse salt on a tray or an already-cured salmon take the same tube and the same cold chamber; butter does too, but with the chamber below 20 °C and for less time, because it softens long before cheese does.

Gear for this recipe

Kamado Bono Media 51 cm

mikamado.es/en/kamados/kamado-bono-media-51

BBQ-Toro 100% apple wood smoking pellets, 1 kg (6 mm calibre)

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/bbq-toro-pellets-manzano-1kg

Naisfei Cold Smoke Tube 15 cm, 304 Stainless Steel

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/naisfei-tubo-ahumador-humo-frio-15cm

Campingaz — Gas Torch for Lighting Charcoal

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/campingaz-antorcha-gas-encendido-carbon

CIRYCASE Dual-Probe Thermometer, 16.3 cm Probes and Timer

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/cirycase-termometro-doble-sonda

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/queso-ahumado-humo-frio-kamado

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