

Recipe by Julia Heffelfinger

Ham-and-Cheese Puff Pastries

Makes 9 pastries

Puff pastry is one of those store-bought ingredients I always keep on hand for quick [hand pies](#), [effortless tarts](#), a juicy [pandowdy](#), or elegant little pastries. These buttery ham-and-cheese bites make a great snack to serve with cocktails, or a light lunch or brunch with a simple green salad on the side. While you can use Brie in this recipe, consider Camembert if you can find it. It has the same gooey consistency of Brie, but a more pronounced flavor.

All-purpose flour, for dusting

2 puff pastry sheets (about 17 ounces, I used Pepperidge Farm brand), thawed in the refrigerator

1 large egg, beaten

¼ cup Dijon mustard, plus more for serving

4 ounces Brie or Camembert cheese, cut into nine 1½-inch slices, about ¼-inch thick

5 thin slices quality deli ham, cut in half

Sesame seeds and flaky sea salt (optional), for sprinkling

Cornichons, for serving (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F and line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. On a lightly floured surface, gently unfold the puff pastry sheets (mine were roughly 9-by-9-inch squares). Set one sheet aside. Brush one sheet of puff pastry all over with some of the egg wash. Visualize three even columns on the sheet of puff pastry (Pepperidge Farm brand already has three columns from the tri-fold lines), then place three evenly spaced dollops of Dijon mustard, about 1½ teaspoons each, in each column (to yield a total of 9 pastries).
3. Top each dollop of mustard with a folded piece of ham (you will have one ½ slice remaining—consider it a snack for the chef!) and a piece of Brie. Arrange the second piece of puff pastry on top and gently press out any air around the ham and cheese bundles. Using a sharp knife, cut into 9 squares. Gently seal the edges with a fork. (Alternatively, you can use a [fluted pasta cutter](#).) Transfer to the prepared baking sheet, spaced at least 2 inches apart. If possible, return the pastries to the refrigerator for 10 to 15 minutes to let the butter firm up before baking.
4. When you're ready to bake, brush the tops of the pastries with the remaining egg wash and sprinkle with sesame seeds and flaky sea salt, if using. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until puffed and a deep golden brown. Some of the cheese will ooze out the sides—that's okay! It firms up to create delicious crispy edges. Let the pastries cool for 10 minutes before serving.
5. Transfer to a plate with a small bowl of mustard for dipping and cornichons for snacking. Enjoy!