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Bobbi Lin for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Eugene Jho.

The Miracle of Crispy Cheese

By [Melissa Clark](#)

Back in the '90s there was a restaurant in Midtown Manhattan called [Frico Bar](#), which specialized in the eponymous crispy cheese wafer from the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region of Italy. The restaurant was only a few steps from The Times's office, and my editor took me there when I was still a fresh-faced freelancer. My first frico was an epiphany. A nibble brought forth a combination of the browned corners of a casserole, the seared Cheddar that oozes from a grilled cheese sandwich, and the singed strands of mozzarella stuck to a pizza pan. That one bite turned my culinary world upside down.

Ali Slagle's latest recipe for [cauliflower with crispy Parmesan](#) (above) brings that experience rushing back to me in a simple but brilliant side dish. It would go nicely with her [rosemary-paprika chicken](#), roasted on a sheet pan. To merge the chicken and frico into one pan, you could whip up Dawn Perry's [crispy frico chicken breasts with mushrooms](#), or my [crispy Parmesan roast chicken with lemon](#). Putting the egg before the bird, there's my recipe for [crispy Parmesan fried eggs](#). And for cheese cracker purists: Ali's [cacio e pepe frico](#) is unmitigated crunch seasoned with a peppery bite.

Not feeling frico-y? Noodles are their floppy textural opposites. Hetty McKinnon has a fantastic new weeknight recipe for [soy sauce noodles with fried eggs and cabbage](#), based on a Cantonese classic. Or try Hetty's [dumpling noodle soup](#), its steaming broth fragrant with garlic, ginger and turmeric.

Here's another idea for your soup pot. Last weekend, I riffed on David Tanis's excellent [clam chowder with spinach and dill](#), substituting blanched kale for the spinach, chorizo for the bacon, and skipping the crème fraîche entirely. (Was it really the same recipe? I don't know, but it was delightful.) Then, for dessert, we had Tracy K. Smith's [poundcake](#), made exactly according to the recipe, and wow, was that a good meal. The leftovers are calling to me now.

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