

MANCHEGO? CHEESE CRACKERS WITH MARCONA ALMONDS

GALLETAS DE QUESO MANCHEGO
CON ALMENDRAS

These “you just can’t stop eating them” crackers are from my friend, food writer Melissa Clark, who, while not Spanish, is the best baker I know. With a bowl of Tangerine-Marinaded Olives (page 22) and a glass of icy, bone-dry sherry, they make a perfect *aperitivo* for company, hard as it is to resist the urge to horde every single one for yourself.

4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, softened
1 cup (about 1/4 pound) grated Manchego cheese
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt, plus more for the egg wash
1 large egg
About 40 blanched almonds, preferably marcona

1. In the bowl of an electric stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter with the cheese until well combined. Scrape down the

side of the bowl and add the flour and salt. Mix on low speed until the dough just comes together.

2. Turn the dough out onto a piece of plastic wrap and form it into a log 1½ inches in diameter. Wrap the dough log in the plastic and refrigerate it until firm, at least 1 hour or up to 4 days (the dough can also be frozen for up to 1 month).

3. Place an oven rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or nonstick liners.

4. Slice the dough into ¼-inch-thick coins and place them on the prepared baking sheets, leaving 1 inch between each. Place the egg and a large pinch of salt in a bowl and beat to mix. Brush the crackers with this egg wash, then press an almond on top of each cracker. Bake on the center rack until the crackers are golden and firm, about 15 minutes. Transfer the crackers to a wire rack to cool. Packed in an airtight container, the crackers will keep for several days. **MAKES ABOUT 40 CRACKERS**