

- Prep Time: 20 minutes
- Cook Time: 20 minutes
- Total Time: 40 minutes
- Yield: 12 jalapeño popper halves (6 servings)
- Skill Level: Easy to Intermediate
- Heat Intensity: Medium (3/5) — *Can be reduced by thorough seeding or increased by leaving the inner membrane intact.*

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## Equipment Needed

- Rimmed baking sheet
- Parchment paper or aluminum foil
- Small mixing bowl
- Paring knife or spoon (for prep)
- Disposable gloves (recommended for handling jalapeños)
- Food processor or hand mixer (optional, for softening cheese)

## Ingredients

### For the Stuffed Jalapeños:

- 6 large fresh jalapeños, cut in half lengthwise and seeded

- 4 oz (115g) Brie cheese, rind partially removed, softened at room temperature
- 4 oz (115g) cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1/2 cup fresh blueberries or high-quality blueberry preserves
- 1 tbsp honey (optional, for added natural sweetness)
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp onion powder
- 1/4 tsp crushed black pepper
- 1/8 tsp fine sea salt

## **For the Topping:**

- 4 slices thick-cut bacon, cooked crispy and finely chopped
- 1/3 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

- 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves or finely chopped fresh rosemary (for garnish)

## Intensity & Heat Profile

Understanding the intensities in this recipe helps you customize it to your personal taste:

1. Spiciness (3/5): The primary heat source is the jalapeño skin and remaining capsaicin. Scraping out all seeds and white pith reduces the intensity significantly.
2. Creaminess (5/5): The combination of ripe Brie and smooth cream cheese coats the palate, effectively softening the punch of heat.
3. Sweetness (4/5): Sweet blueberries and honey create a contrast that cuts through the rich, fatty cheese layer.
4. Crunch (4/5): Buttered panko breadcrumbs and crisp bacon pieces add an essential textural bite to contrast the soft filling.

## Step-by-Step Cooking Instructions

### Step 1: Prep the Oven and Pan

Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or aluminum foil for effortless cleanup.

## **Step 2: Prepare the Jalapeños**

Put on kitchen gloves to protect your hands from capsaicin. Cut each jalapeño in half lengthwise through the stem. Using a small spoon, scrape out the seeds and white ribs from each half. Arrange the pepper halves hollow-side up on the prepared baking sheet.

## **Step 3: Whip the Cheese Filling**

In a medium bowl, combine the softened cream cheese, softened Brie (rind partially removed), garlic powder, onion powder, sea salt, and black pepper. Stir vigorously or use a hand mixer until the cheeses are smoothly blended and uniform.

## **Step 4: Stuff the Peppers**

Spoon or pipe equal amounts of the cheese mixture into each jalapeño half, filling them flush to the top edge without overfilling.

## **Step 5: Add the Blueberry Layer**

If using fresh blueberries, gently press 3 to 4 berries directly into the cream cheese filling of each popper. If using blueberry preserves, dollop about 1 teaspoon of preserves over the top of the cheese layer on each pepper.

## **Step 6: Prepare and Add the Crunchy Topping**

In a small bowl, mix the panko breadcrumbs and melted butter together until the crumbs are evenly coated. Stir in the cooked, crumbled bacon. Generously sprinkle the panko-bacon mixture over the blueberry layer on each jalapeño popper, pressing down lightly so it stays in place during baking.

## **Step 7: Bake to Golden Perfection**

Transfer the baking sheet to the middle rack of your preheated oven. Bake at 400°F (200°C)

for 18 to 22 minutes, or until the jalapeños are tender-crisp, the cheese is melted and bubbly, and the breadcrumb topping is golden brown.

### Step 8: Garnish and Serve

Remove the poppers from the oven and allow them to cool for 5 minutes (the cheese filling will be extremely hot). Drizzle with extra honey if desired and garnish with fresh thyme leaves. Serve warm.

### Chef’s Tips for Success

- Managing Jalapeño Heat: If you prefer mild poppers, soak the halved, seeded jalapeños in cold water for 15 minutes before filling, then pat them dry with paper towels.
- Brie Handling: Brie is much easier to cut and remove the rind from when cold, but much easier to mix into cream cheese when brought back to room temperature.
- Air Fryer Adaptation: Bake in an air fryer at 375°F (190°C) for 8 to 10 minutes until the top is golden and the peppers are tender.

### Nutritional Information

*Serving size: 2 popper halves (1/6th of total recipe)*

*Values are estimates based on standard ingredients.*

| Nutrient  | Amount Per Serving | % Daily Value |
|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
| Calories  | 240 kcal           | —             |
| Total Fat | 18 g               | 23%           |

| Nutrient            | Amount Per Serving | % Daily Value |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Saturated Fat       | 10 g               | 50%           |
| Trans Fat           | 0 g                | —             |
| Cholesterol         | 45 mg              | 15%           |
| Sodium              | 380 mg             | 17%           |
| Total Carbohydrates | 12 g               | 4%            |
| Dietary Fiber       | 1 g                | 4%            |
| Sugars              | 6 g                | —             |
| Protein             | 8 g                | 16%           |