



Creating the Perfect

Cheese Board

in 9 Easy Steps

CELLO



**CHEESE
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A cheese board is an easy, fun appetizer that is sure to add an air of sophistication to any get-together. Aside from being delicious, these masterpiece appetizers make every host (or hostess!) with the most truly feel like you have your party-throwing ducks in a row. Your peers will be both proud and jealous to sample a cheese board that's easy on both the eyes and the tastebuds.

Plus, every cheese lover jumps at the chance to tackle the process of putting one together! Cheese boards have a little of something for everyone, whether your guests are looking for a sweet or savory snack. Regardless of the differences in your tastes, the real key to creating the perfect cheese board is to pair quality ingredients that vary in both flavor and texture.

The process of creating the perfect cheese board requires much more than just laying some cheeses out next to a tin of toothpicks. While our expert tips are a great place to start, make sure to let yourself be creative in order to make your cheese board truly unique.

Cheese boards don't have to be expensive to curate. If you need to keep your budget down, just skip out on the nuts and cut back on the charcuterie and expensive crackers. After all, the cheese itself is what's most important. So when in doubt, [get great cheese](#) before worrying about anything else.

To make your cheese board a standout display, follow these nine steps:





1: Choose the Right Board

Step one is selecting your board. A slate or wooden serving tray will really step up your party's atmosphere, but you can also use a plate, cutting board, or baking sheet. Match the size up with your expected guest list. Bigger trays for bigger parties— it's that simple!

The portability of the cheese board is imperative. You'll be moving it at least twice (once to store before the party and once to set it out for everyone to sample), so be sure it's a tray you can easily carry.

Perhaps the most important factor in choosing the right board, though, is what you're going to put on it. If you plan this out beforehand, you'll have an easier time selecting the perfect surface to display your fancy cheeses.



Pro Cello Tip:

Don't forget that everyone is going to be eating off this cheese board. Make sure that the proper cutlery or toothpicks are laid out as well, or you'll have people grabbing at cheese and crackers with their hands. Level up this added touch by getting cute, themed utensils and napkins.

2: Go for Quality and Complementary Cheese

Yes, next is the most integral piece of the cheese board. As far as portions go, you'll want to plan on roughly 1 - 2 oz of cheese per person, with a little extra just in case. The cheeses should vary in flavor, color, texture, and shape. Cheese is one of the most diverse foods out there, so get plenty of contrast — meaning blend firm and soft, sharp and mild, etc.

Getting good quality, fresh cheese is more important than getting specific types of cheese, so give your local stores a good look-over to see what your options are. Aim to have something familiar, something exciting, and then a variety of milk cheeses, hard cheeses, and aged cheeses. For a varied board, pick 3 - 5 of the following:

Hard Cheeses:

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|  Sharp White Cheddar |  <u>Romano</u> |
|  <u>Parmesan</u> |  Smoked Gouda |

Soft Cheeses:

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|  Brie |  <u>Fontal</u> |
|  Goat |  Fresh Mozzarella |
|  Mascarpone | |



Pro Cello Tip:

Add in a rubbed cheese like our bergamot and hibiscus fontal wedge to infuse a nice, rich pop of color that will stand out in a sea of yellow. Add even more variety by slicing the cheese into different shapes and sizes.



Pro Cello Tip:

Don't be afraid to go for contrasting pairings with your bread choices. For example, cinnamon raisin bread is a great way to offset most goat cheeses. Opposites attract here, too!

3: Add Some Nuts and Grains

By this point, you know that variety is the name of the game. Nuts add texture that can be much-needed to balance out the softness of cheese. Be sure to also add some crackers or breads of different shapes, flavors, and sizes just like you did with your cheese to jazz up the appearance. This can include traditional breads like sliced baguettes as well as breadsticks and crackers.

Here are the most traditional nut options that are versatile enough to work on any cheese board:

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|  Walnuts |  Macadamia Nuts |
|  Almonds |  Hazelnuts |
|  Pistachios |  Pecans |

4: Slice Your Charcuterie

Select your cured meats carefully, pairing each one with the appropriate cheese. Some good rules of thumb include pairing complementary flavors, contrasting texture, and balancing acidity. Most boards should have 3 - 4 options and again, 1 - 2 oz per person (with just a smidge extra!) should suffice. Prosciutto, salami, soppressata, chorizo, and mortadella are all excellent options.



Pro Cello Tip:

Think ahead to the drink pairings when you're selecting your meats. More woody, rustic reds like Cabernet and Malbec bring out the smokiness in charcuterie meats like cured ham and salami. Go for a lighter wine with meats that have a lot of spices.





5: Cleanse Your Palate With Fruits and Veggies

The sky's the limit with fruits and vegetables. Fresh berries and roasted red peppers are common cheese board additions, but you may also want to consider:

-  Pear Slices
-  Pickled Vegetables
-  Fresh Figs
-  Cherry tomatoes
-  Radishes

Dips are always a great addition to any cheese board, but if you're loading yours up with fruits and vegetables already, accompaniments like hummus and pesto become a must.

Try matching your veggies and dips to the season.

 **Fall:**
Roasted butternut squash, apples, pears, grapes

 **Winter:**
Roasted brussel sprouts, cranberry sauce, pomegranate seeds, blood orange slices

 **Spring:**
Roasted asparagus, baby carrots, radishes, berries

 **Summer:**
Tomatoes, peaches, figs



Pro Cello Tip:

You can easily find apples year-round, so slice those up thinly enough to create a pretty fan design and drizzle some honey over the top.

6: Balance Sweet with Savory

Adding a little something extra can really take your board to the next level. Sweet and savory complement one another, so don't forget to balance out those savory cheeses with some sweetness! Consider adding candied nuts, honey, dried apricots, or fig jam to create that oppositional flavor balance.



Pro Cello Tip:

Try adding M&Ms as a sweet element. They're a nice pop of color and a fun, indulgent accompaniment.



7: Sprinkle on the Extra Garnishes

Get seasonal with your garnishes, too! Here is where you can add some decorative (and delicious!) touches to your cheese board. Garnishes can be as simple as additional fruits, or you can get really creative and look for edible flowers or herbs. The fresher the better!

While garnishes can be yummy, they are primarily present on the board to look pretty. Choose complementary colors and shapes that add an appealing aesthetic to your cheese board.



Pro Cello Tip:

Thyme and rosemary can serve as great garnishes because they add an extra aromatic element to your board.



8: Get Creative With Your Arrangement

This is the part where your personal tastes get to really shine. The presentation of your cheese board can be just as important as the cheese you chose, so arrange your creation with care and purpose. You want something that is both interesting and beautiful with just enough personal flair to make it undeniably yours.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

1: Create an Anchor

Put something sturdy in the center of your cheese board. The easiest anchor is a bowl of dip like hummus.

2: Don't Ignore Your Corners

If your cheese board is square, be sure to place something in each corner to avoid any awkward dead space.

3: Avoid Gaps

A smaller, fuller plate is always better than a bigger one with large gaps in it. Sometimes a garnish can fill in an unwanted gap. Other times you may want to increase your cheeses and breads.

4: Use Garnishes Appropriately

Flowers, fruits, spreads or other garnishes can make a great final touch to a cheese board, but don't feel compelled to use them if they just don't fit. Too many garnishes can overwhelm your board.

5: Bring On the Bowls

Your cheeses, meats, and breads should be directly on the board. Fruits may go on the board, as well. However, nuts, olives and other additions are best served in small bowls that keep them from spreading over the board. Bowls add to your board's aesthetic, too!

6: When in Doubt, Fan it Out

Bread and crackers are best fanned out in a semicircle. You can do this with meats as well, although meats can also look nice folded or set out in straight lines.



Pro Cello Tip:

Sometimes people don't know which dips or spreads to combine with which cheeses. Make it easy on them by either adding a slice of that cheese as a centerpiece of the dip. You can also spread or drizzle a bit over one piece of that specific cheese to give your guests a clear hint.

Unless you're frantically setting out your arrangement minutes before your party, you'll likely need to store your cheese board for some time. To make sure nothing dries out, remember to cover the board snugly with foil or plastic wrap. You should ideally set your cheese board out about one hour before people are ready to dig in. This will bring the food to room temperature and help bring out flavors and aromas.

Above all else, remember that this is your creation, so have fun with it!

9: Don't Forget the Drinks

Red wine, white wine and even beer can pair nicely with each cheese on your tray and will help reset the palate in between cheese types. If you approach beer pairings the same way you would wine, you'll find some truly delectable combinations.

Beer Pairing

Before you reach for a random ale, make sure you've thought through what you want the beer to accomplish. Is it a palate cleanser meant to give your guests' taste buds a break between two sharp cheeses? Or do you need to find a drink that will bring out the flavors of a more subtle cheese?

Ultimately you're looking for beers that complement the cheeses you're serving. [Here are some of our favorite beer and cheese combinations:](#)

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|---|--|
|  Parmesan & IPA |  Fontal & Stout |
|  Cheddar & Porter |  Feta & Belgian |
|  Asiago & Saison |  Mascarpone & Pilsner |

Wine Pairing

For your wintertime soirees, [nothing pairs better than red wine](#). There's a sweet, fruity red wine to match every quality cheese. Use darker, richer flavors for pairing with aged cheeses and leave the lighter wines for saltier cheeses like feta.



Pro Cello Tip:

When in doubt, go with a good Pinot Noir!





Cheese boards are classy and fancy when you're throwing a party, but they can also be just plain fun. A lot of what you have access to may depend on your budget, time and what ingredients are available to you. So don't stress yourself over not finding that perfect gouda.

Make every cheese board unique. Each party is one-of-a-kind, so why not create a cheese board that's just as special?

And of course, there's nothing wrong with a little taste-test experimentation while you lay out plans for your cheese board. You just might find your new favorite pairing! When you need some on-the-go advice, head to the [Cello Cheese Chat](#) to ask all of your quick pairing questions.

If you're in a hurry and want to take some of the guesswork out of it, start with one of our signature [Cello cheese flights](#) to make the decision making process easier.

Enjoy, and above all remember to Cheese Confidently!

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