



Charcuterie Tray

WITH CHEF JEN

How to Assemble a Charcuterie Platter. It is not difficult, but a few basic rules. A Charcuterie platter is an easy and elegant way to entertain especially if you have last minute guests without much time to cook anything.

Charcuterie means simply cured meats, crackers, cheese, olives, fresh fruit, dried fruits, olives, pickles, and nuts. Select as much or as little of the above items and mix and match as you like.

How to assemble a Charcuterie Platter

Offer a combination of aged, firm, soft, crumbly, and creamy cheeses. Finally, play with the presentation by rolling, folding, layering, and lying flat to give the plate more visual variety.

What meats should I offer?

Salami or other cured meats, will give a different visual and textural experience. Ideally, try meats, fruit, jelly or jam, pairs nicely with the saltiness of the meat.

It's easier to slice salami when it's cold, or better yet have your butcher slice it for you.

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What cheese should I offer?

A good rule for cheese is to have something hard, something soft, something goat, something cow.

Worth mentioning, people either love blue cheese or hate it. I suggest including a more neutral cheese that everyone will like instead of a rich, robust blue cheese.

Cheese is best served at room temperature. Allow cheeses to sit at room temperature at least thirty minutes before serving.

Do I need to have bread or crackers?

Sturdy chips and crackers, toasted bread or baguette slices are all good options. You'll want to offer at least two options from this category. Also, consider adding another cracker if your Charcuterie and Cheese Platter is large.

What else makes a good Charcuterie tray?

1. First of all, I like to have either fresh or dried fruit.
2. Nuts are always a good option and popular especially with men.
3. Offer a pickled element. Maybe olives, baby dill or gherkin pickles, pepperoncini peppers or marinated artichokes are all options.
4. A smear of whole grain mustard adds flavor and interest.
5. Add hummus or feta dip if the crowd is going to be large.

Finally, provide a knife with each cheese so that flavors don't get comingled.

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