

# HOW TO CREATE THE PERFECT CHEESE BOARD

Summer soirées are right around the corner—what better way to brighten up your event than with a gorgeous cheese board? We asked food and home stylist, Meg Quinn, to show us how to create the perfect rainbow-inspired cheese board.



## FRESH FRUITS & VEGGIES

While we may call them cheese or charcuterie boards, fruits and veggies play a vital role in the creation of a balanced and beautiful board, by adding color and texture. It's also nice to be mindful of guests who don't eat meat or cheese, or those who may want a healthy option. When selecting your fruits, go for whole fruits that will hold up for a few hours, versus cut fruit.

- RASPBERRIES** These will stay fresh for hours, and have a great texture.
- RED AND GREEN GRAPES** A cheese board staple. Be sure they are seedless!
- CUCUMBERS** Go for the Persian or English variety, sliced ¼" thick.
- CARROTS** Les Petite tri-colored carrots from Trader Joe's are ideal, as opposed to baby carrots that look a bit basic. Sort them by color, and place alongside like-colored items.

## CHEESES

Choose 3-4 various cheeses with different textures and consistency—hard, semi-firm, soft, along with a mix of cow's milk, goat's milk, and sheep's milk cheeses.

- KERRYGOLD DUBLINER** This affordable Irish sharp cheddar has the perfect artisanal look when placed in rugged slices.
- BRIE** This classic soft cheese is a must for any cheese board—choose a double or triple cream brie. Place as a whole wedge.
- MANCHEGO** This Spanish style cheese is aged longer and has a buttery texture. Slice and fan out evenly from the center.
- BLUE** Blue cheese has a sharp taste that some may love, some may hate... but looks beautiful on the rainbow cheese board!

## MEATS

Meats provide the salty, savory counterpoint to the rich cheeses.

- ITALIAN DRY SALAMI** These thinly sliced rounds are perfect for creating "salami roses" on your platter. Simply fold the round in half, then in half again and place it with the point down onto the board. Tightly fill-in as many roses as space allows.
- CHIANTI RED WINE ARTISAN SALAMI** This Trader Joe's salami log should be sliced into ¼" thick pieces, with the casing removed.

## DRIED FRUITS

Dried fruits are essentially concentrated sugar, and are a great compliment to the savory items on the board.

- DRIED PERSIMMONS** These vibrant beauties from Trader Joe's taste like candy and are a fun shape and color.
- DRIED ASSORTED BERRIES** A pretty mix of dried strawberries, cherries, cranberries, and blueberries.
- DRIED BANANA SLICES** These sweet treats provide a crunchy texture.

## NUTS

Who doesn't love fancy nuts? These can also be used as a filler at the end of your board assembly.

- MARCONA ALMONDS** Available in a rosemary flavor at Trader Joe's, these are perfectly salty and savory.
- CANDIED PECANS** These offer a sweet note.
- PISTACHIOS** Be sure to shell these before setting out!

## ACOUTREMENTS

To really elevate your board, there are a few high-end items that will take it to the next level!

- QUINCE PASTE** A sweet jelly made from the pulp of a quince fruit, it pairs perfectly with the Manchego it's sitting beside. Slice into even rectangles and fan out. If you can't find quince paste, a fig jam is a great substitute.
- CASTELVETRANO OLIVES** These smooth and buttery olives are a crowd-pleaser, not quite as tangy as greek olives.
- CORNICHONS** These tiny pickles are cute and fun to eat.

## GARNISH

Every board needs a finishing garnish that will hold up for hours. Parsley and mint wilt too quickly, instead try heartier pieces like lavender and rosemary sprigs, pine nuts, or lemon slices.

- ROSEMARY SPRINGS** These aromatic springs are perfect for placing on top of brie, around edges, and filling in any empty holes.



When you've completed your cheese board, be sure to share it on social with Meg using the hashtag: #ainttooproudtocheese

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