



# CHEESE PLATES



## **Building A Cheese Plate**

Cheese plates are excellent for parties and serve as wonderful appetizers for both casual and formal gatherings. A cheese plate is versatile, because you can tailor it to your event and the number of guests by altering the presentation and size. Whether you are having an event catered or doing it yourself, you can create an appetizing cheese plate by including the appropriate accompanying foods.

## **Formal Cheese Plates**

### **The Basics**

#### **What to Buy (also see “Choosing Cheeses”)**

Three ounces of cheese per person if it’s an appetizer, 6 ounces per person if it’s the main event. Choose cheeses with a variety of milks, regions, and textures – see “Choosing Cheeses” section below.

#### **How to Arrange**

Place the cheese on a plate from mildest to strongest. If you’re not sure which is strongest, smell it. The strongest smell equals strongest cheese flavor. Serve at room temperature for fullest flavor.

#### **How to Cut It**

For softer cheeses like Brie or fresh goat cheese, use a knife that has a rounded edge for easy spreading. Harder, drier cheeses, like pecorino, need a sharp knife or cheese plane:

#### **How to Store It**

Put leftover cheese in parchment or waxed paper rather than in plastic wrap, then place in the crisper drawer of your fridge. It will stay fresher and won’t smell and taste like plastic.

## **Casual Cheese Plates**

For casual gatherings such as family reunions or birthday parties, a cheese plate could hold cubed or sliced cheese. Casual gatherings are well suited for finger foods. Sliced cheese goes well with rolls of lunch meat, crackers of various grains and textures, small slices of bread, mixed nuts, and olives. You might also include an artichoke or spinach dip. This allows guests to create small finger sandwiches on bread or crackers to snack on while waiting for the main course to be served.

If your event has children in attendance, finger food are always a good option, and many will prefer these snacks to the main course. You might want to include pretzel sticks and butter crackers with cubed cheese, and fruits such as grapes, strawberries, or blueberries. Avoid fruits that brown like apples and bananas.