



CHEESE PLATES



Goes With Cheese

On The Plate

Cheeses can be served very simply, to stand alone and display their natural beauty. Or...

Enjoy cheese with plain crackers or crusty plain bread.

You can also try pairing spicy blue cheeses with honey-walnut bread.

Embellish with apples, pears, figs, dates, and berries.

Try chutneys, fruit pastes, jams, and honey.

A selection of olives, roasted peppers and tomatoes are a good match for fresh goat's cheeses.

Don't serve crackers with black pepper or other spices that might interfere with the flavors of the cheese.

Stay away from citrus, which is too acidic and will overwhelm your cheeses.

In The Glass

There are several web sites with advice on wine (or beer) and cheese pairings, i.e.,

<http://www.artisanalcheese.com/prodinfo.asp?number=NP2001>

Wine & Cheese Pairing Basics

1. Texture - The softer the cheese the more it coats the mouth, blocking many wine sensations.

Bottom Line - White wines tend to have more refreshing acidity and therefore a more appropriate cleansing effect on soft or creamy cheeses.

2. Sweetness - Some mild cheeses taste slightly sweet and make dry wines seem acidic, tart and devoid of fruit. This happens whenever a food is perceived to be sweeter than a wine served with it.

Bottom Line - In general, semi-dry and sweet wines are more versatile with cheeses than are dry wines.

3. Flavors - Very ripe, spicy or pungent cheeses have overpowering flavors that eclipse most wines.

Bottom Line - Strong cheeses require strong wines. Red wines (packed with fruit, acidity and flavor), sweet or aromatic whites and fortified wines like ports and sherries have the best chance with extreme flavors.

Summary

Mild hard cheeses match a wider range of wines than do soft, ripe or mature cheeses. Overall, white wines go better with cheese than red wines. Furthermore, sweeter whites tend to be more versatile than drier whites. The more tannic the red the harder the cheese needs to be.

What Beer? Which Cheese?

Yes, beer does indeed go with cheese! Wine and cheese are paired together so routinely that not many folks realize that beer and cheese have far more in common than wine and cheese.

Both are simple and nutritious, each born of grains and carefully nurtured in an ancient fermentation process.



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1. Fresh, very soft cheeses are uncooked and unripe or barely ripened; coagulated with rennet or by lactic fermentation, or even by using lemon juice; and packed simply into tubs, crocks, or molded by hand. Some are very soft, even spoonable. Very soft cheeses include pot cheese, cottage cheese, cream cheese and ricotta.

Beer: These cheeses have low taste profiles and go well with more mellow beers such as American wheat beer, American lagers, amber lagers, and Munich lagers.

2. Soft, spreadable cheeses, such as Camembert or Brie, have bloomy rinds.

Beer: These go well with Euro-lagers, pilsners, pale ales, porters and American fruit ales.

3. Semi-soft cheeses include many monastic cheeses and washed rind cheeses that are cured with brine, beer, wine or spices. Trappist cheeses and Muenster are good examples, as are Gouda, Havarti, Tilsit, Liederkrantz, Port-Salut and American, Colby, Monterey Jack and similar cheeses.

Beer: These all go with more energetic beer at the lower end of the hop rate, such as English brown ales, amber ales, golden ales, bitters, and Belgian pale ales, plus Vienna lagers, mellow bocks, or Oktoberfest brews, not to mention rye ales and Bavarian whites.

4. Semi-hard, sliceable cheese. Cheddar (there are many varieties, including white aged cheddar), Swiss, Cheshire, Tilsit, and other sliceable cheeses, such as Edam, Gruyere, emmentaler, Jarlsberg, and aged Gouda.

Beer: Good sandwich cheeses go well with pilsners, extra special bitters and pale ales, plus IPAs, double bocks, strong ales and almost any Belgian ale, particularly wits and fruit ales.

5. Hard cheese. These are very firm, grainy, cooked and pressed grating cheeses, such as parmigiano. But they are also nice nibbly cheeses and need something heavy in a beverage.

Beer: Strong ale or doppelbock, stout or porter.

6. Blue vein, marbled cheese, strong flavored and crumbly, including Roquefort, Stilton, Gorgonzola, and other blues, especially those from Wisconsin, but particularly including Maytag Blue from Iowa.

Beer: Try stronger porters, stouts, and heavier dark beers, such as old ales, barley wines, and Imperial stouts. The latter matches Stilton especially well.

7. Goat cheeses--chevre--are usually a bit more flavorful than regular cheeses of similar types. Roquefort, romano and feta are good examples.

Beer: Think IPAs, ESBs, American brown ales, stouts and porters.

8. Pasta filata are the stretched curd cheeses of Italy, such as Mozzarella and Provolone.

Beer: They go well with Belgian wits, Bavarian whites, and heavier Bavarian wheat beers (doppelweizen).