

How To Assemble A Classic Cheese Board



Fernando and I have been picnicking every chance we get during this Covid-19 lockdown usually just in our backyard or sometimes even on our lounge room floor. It's been so nice just to sit and chill without the television being on and listening to our favourite tunes.

Sometimes I will cook or bake something from simple picnic recipes I have collected over the years, however you don't really have to cook for a picnic at all. Instead, you can throw together a cheese plate and some complementary snacks. It's the quickest picnic prep ever! Fernando loved it so much that we're making it a Friday night tradition.

In my honest opinion, there's nothing in the world better than cheese. It's time to embrace the cheesy side of life and take joy in the small things, so get down with a classic cheese board complete with all the best things in life (cheese and wine, obviously).

I've compiled some basic pointers on how you can assemble a classic cheese plate, including how to pick the cheeses and what to keep in mind when eating (I mean assembling) your plate.

What Cheese Should I Use?

A great, classic cheese plate will contain selections from all the major types of milk (cow, sheep, and goat- I personally don't like goat so I don't include it on my cheese board) and will represent a range of cheese styles, such as:

- **Fresh & young:** Think fresh or lightly aged goat cheese, farmer's cheese, and ricotta.
- **Bloomy rinded:** Mushroomy and earthy, typically soft and creamy, with a fluffy white rind.
- **Washed rind:** Soft to semi-soft in texture, and stinky in the best possible way.
- **Semi-firm:** Creamy, smooth texture, and rich flavour.
- **Firm & aged:** Hard texture – can be crumbly – and lingering nutty umami flavour.
- **Blue:** Creamy texture, with a pungent aroma and a sharp, salty bite.

Pick between 4 to 6 types of cheeses and make sure you're choosing a range of styles along the way.

To ensure the highest quality, we recommend speaking to a cheesemonger and to ask them the right kind of questions such as:

- *What's tasting good right now?* Remember that cheese is a living food product, so what tastes great one week may be past its prime the following week.
- *What's new and making an impression these days?*
- *Can I have a taste?* This is likely the most important question there is!

If you don't have the luxury to speak to a cheesemonger, choose cheeses that look like they have been freshly wrapped. You should see no liquid pooling in the plastic wrap and there should be no graying under the rinds of any cheeses. Your fresh cheeses should be white as snow and the firm cheeses should not be cracking or dry.

How Much Cheese Should I Buy?

I recommend planning on 100 grams of cheese per person, especially if you plan on serving a lot of other food (and wine) alongside your board. Since most places likely won't sell less than 100 grams, you'll likely be forced to buy at least that much (but we're not complaining). The general rule of thumb is that it never hurts to round up because the more cheese, the merrier!

How Should I Store My Cheese Until Picnic Time?

After you get home from cheese shopping, unwrap any wedges that were packaged in plastic and re-wrap them in cheese paper and parchment paper. Finish by wrapping a layer of plastic wrap over it to prevent them from drying out. Wrapping the cheeses in paper will prevent the cheese from picking up any plastic aroma and will give the cheese some breathing room between the layer of plastic and paper.

How To Set Up Your Cheese Board

Cheese tastes their best when at room temperature, so once it's picnic time, take your cheeses out of the fridge 1.5 to 2 hours before serving. Keep them wrapped so they don't dry out!

When displaying the cheeses, choose a board that's large enough to hold all your cheese selections or divide them between a few smaller boards. Make sure you give enough wiggle room to slice the cheeses and give them enough room to breathe. Set up one knife per cheese so that the flavours don't mix or get contaminated.

As far as other snacks to pair with your cheeses, the sky's the limit! Classic choices include nuts, grapes, dried fruit, honeys, and jams along with basic crackers, fruit breads, olives, or plain baguettes. If you'd like to mix it up a bit, try to throw in some chutneys and mostardas, candied nuts, fig cakes, or even chocolate.

Similar to how a slice of cheese will breathe new life into a burger, a side of certain nibbles will help breathe new life into the experience of cheese. Pile up those pairings onto the board in a way that's artful and visually pleasing and feel free to get creative with it!

The most important thing in all of this is to **enjoy!** Crack open a great bottle of wine (I mean rosé), such as the [Young and Co Strawberry Hustle Rose](#) and savour the experience of pairing great flavours together.

Dig in, snuggle up with your partner, and raise your glasses to all that is cheese!