

OVERALL time: 20 mins

FESTIVE GRAZING PLATTER

This festive season, bring everyone together to enjoy this amazing grazing platter.

Metric

Number of servings : 8

ingredients

THIS IS WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO DO

PREP TIME: 20 mins | COOKING TIME: 0 mins

How to make a festive grazing platter:

First, choose a board, tray, or platter depending on how many people you would like to feed and how much you would like to spend.

Then pick something that you can cut on and that ingredients won't fall off of.

Choose a variety of cheeses.

Mix it up with a hard cheese, a soft cheese, a blue cheese, an aged cheese, a fun flavoured cheese with spice or chilli etc. Play with textures and flavours to create a fun assortment.

Think about the accompaniments that you may have in your fridge already or enjoy eating. E.g. blue cheese and green fig preserve are an excellent combination.

Then slice up the cheeses, especially the hard cheeses, into different shapes and sizes. Make it easy for the guests to serve themselves.

Something like a soft creamy gorgonzola can be left whole.

Cheese examples:

Gouda, Cheddar, Boerenkaas, Gruyere, Brie, Camembert, Goat's Milk Chevin, Parmigiano Reggiano, Manchego, Havarti, Smoked Gouda, Cheddar or Mozzarella, Gorgonzola, Stilton,

Roquefort.

Include a few varieties of cured meats.

Do not lay them all flat. Arrange them in loose rolls, bunches, lie some flat, fold some over, make them look different and beautiful but also easy to pick up.

You can also include a pâté to spread on little toasts or crackers.

Cured meat examples:

Salami, chorizo, parma ham, soppressata, prosciutto, mortadella, biltong, chicken liver pâté etc

Add a festive spin to your platter by adding slices of cooked gammon or turkey with something like a little cranberry sauce or apple jelly on the side.

Choose a good mix of breads and crackers.

It is always a good eating experience to mix up textures like crackers, breadsticks, soft breads and or freshly toasted crostini.

Warm crunchy baguette or crusty ciabatta are also always crowd pleasers.

Make your own delicious little crostini by slicing up a baguette and drizzling it with olive oil. Sprinkle generously with Cape Herb & Spice Garlic & Herb Shaker. Bake until golden brown.

It is also nice to include a gluten free option and a low carb / banting option to make sure all guests are taken care of. e.g. seed crackers.

Fresh produce.

With your main elements ticked off it is now time to add some freshness and colour.

Fruit and vegetables add contrast to rich, salty meats and cheeses. Include things that can be eaten easily like baby carrots and mange tout. ***Roast some seasonal vegetables using Cape Herb & Spice Veggie Roast Seasoning and a little olive oil.*** Keep some vegetables raw for crunch. Add a mix of fresh and dried fruit. For the best flavour aim for in-season fruit like fresh juicy peaches in summer and crisp apples in winter.

Add delicious dips like hummus, tzatziki or whipped feta.

Check out this great trio of roasted vegetable hummus:

<https://www.capeherb.co.za/news/roast-veggie-hummus-three-ways>

Accompaniments, preserves & pickles.

Take a deep dive into your pantry and fridge. Salty rich cheese begs for something to cut through the fat like a sweet preserve, an acidic pickle or something like a chutney which is both. Olives, artichoke hearts, pickled onions, olive tapenade, green fig preserve, ginger preserve and a variety of nuts add great texture and flavour.

Hot honey has been the rage for a while and is so easy to whip up.

Combine a cup of local honey with about 5ml Cape Herb & Spice Sriracha Chilli Seasoning. Bring to a simmer, allow to cool and then drizzle over cheese and tart fruit.

Assembly.

Most types of charcuterie and cheese are at their best when served at room temperature.

If you want to be very organised for your guests, assemble your board and keep it in the fridge if you have the space. Or assemble in time for their arrival. Either way, remove charcuterie and cheese from the fridge at least one hour before serving.

Experiment, have fun with the combinations, and know that you cannot go wrong with putting together a delicious feast with all of the above elements. **Enjoy to the fullest!**

Recipe concept, photography and video by Bianca Davies: @beeblegum on Instagram | <http://thesecretlifeofbee.co.za/>

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