

Building the perfect cheese platter

What to buy?

Shop the cheese somewhere you trust, the staff should be knowledgeable and give you generous with advice and tastes. Aim for three to five cheeses with a range of textures and milk types. Include at least one entry-level cheese like a creamy Brie or an aged Cheddar, along with something most people in the room won't be familiar with, like Challerhocker, a creamier cousin of Gruyère.

Arranging the platter

Make sure to take the cheese out of the fridge a couple of hours before serving, it should be served at room temperature. When plating, leave oozier cheeses in one piece for your guests to serve themselves, but cut a small starter piece, including the rind, to signal that rind should be included in the bite.

Choosing accompaniments

Classic companions include honey, jam, cornichons, olives, cured meat, figs, pears, or dried fruits and nuts, particularly Marcona almonds. But don't be afraid to try something new. The most memorable cheese boards are playful and unstuffy. As far as crackers and bread go, aim for variety. Offer a neutral option, such as a baguette or water cracker, and a more complex, texture-driven one, such as crostini, seeded crackers, or miche.

