



BUILDING A CHARCUTERIE BOARD

Are you ready to gather up your friends and just enjoy the autumn activities? Football games, tailgating gathering, and holiday parties bring forth times for celebrating. The big question is what to serve that is easy and yet a crowd pleaser. The answer is a charcuterie board! And it's much easier to prepare than you think. The secret is that guests just love the idea of selecting their own favorites.

Start with visiting your favorite deli counter but zero in on the zesty sausages like chorizo or salami. Add some prosciutto slices that you can wrap around sweet dates. I like to vary the types, having some slices, chunks, or small "slice yourself" rolls. Select about 2 ounces per person and include different types of meat.

I love to go wild and add some unusual cheese like cranberry goat cheese, onion golden cheddar, peppered Monterey, baby Swiss bits, chunky cheese curds, and of course, some blue cheese. These are only a few suggestions, but just add your favorites. I found the best way to save money and serve a great selection is to visit the small basket of leftover portions at your cheese market's counter. Great prices and lots of varieties!

My favorites for cutting the richness of meats and cheeses include fresh or dried apricots, figs, apples, or pears and don't forget that a small cluster of fresh grapes. Also, add a few whole salted nuts for a nice crunch like almonds or walnuts.

Assorted pickled vegetables, sweet cornichons, zesty pickled peppers, olives, or baby dills provide a sparkle to the other ingredients.

Add a finishing touch of fresh baked crunchy bread slices and a selection of savory or herb crackers. I really love to include some oatcake slices with pumpkin cream cheese and a few tantalizing condiments, mustards, jams, or your own favorites.

Have most of your ingredients at room temperatures except for those last minute refrigerated add-ons.

Discover how much fun parties can be by just collecting the ingredients, placing them on your favorite serving board or platter, and know that it just doesn't get any better than this. ENJOY!