

# Ask Culinnaire: Assembling the Perfect Cheese Board

Janine Eva Trotta asked Adrian and Carie Lee Watters of Springbank Cheese Company for their help and advice to create the perfect cheese board.



**Wine and cheese parties rank high on the totem pole of fabulous and interactive evenings with friends, but how does one really wow a crowd with an array of cheese that both titillates the palate and looks fabulous in presentation?**

**Are there particular garnishes or sides one should incorporate that will enhance the tasting experience?**

Mix it up but always include your favourites.

An exciting cheese board is created with a variety of textures, milk sources and colour. Include a cheese with a great story like Morbier, Le 1608 Charlevoix or Roquefort, or something unusual like Le Cendrillon, Langres or Huntsman. Venture to include an outstanding blue like St. Agur from France that will both satiate the blue lovers and provide mid-range blue intensity with a heavenly creamy texture to those new to blues.

Plan for volume and shape.

An odd number of cheeses creates optimal presentation. For an intimate gathering of a few friends, three is a great number. For a larger crowd using five cheese types or more will work well. If planning a light appetizer provide 30g per person, while for a wine and cheese aim for for 90g per person.



Photograph courtesy Springbank Cheese Company.

We favour serving cheese in large pieces or cut once or twice using different angles to create more visual appeal. The larger piece presentation also helps to keep the cheese fresher for longer periods of time while entertaining. Space the pieces out to provide room for your guests to slice the cheese, and for the accents you may wish to include.

Enhance presentation with labels.

Cheese labels can be as simple as a folded card including the cheese name, writing in chalk on a slate board, or a fancier porcelain cheese tag. Another fun idea is to create information cards that include the name of the cheese, country of origin, and a suggested pairing of wine, beer or scotch. Your guests will love the ability to use this information for their future cheese enjoyment.

Select the right platter and accents.

Your platter choice may be a dinner plate from your collection, a cutting board, a mirror, slate board or a specially cut tile slab. Whichever you select, dress it up with some of your favourite nuts and dried fruit such as cranberries with maple syrup or the fabulous Mission figs. Grapes and pears are great choices as well. For some tasty diversity add fancy olives and charcuterie. Quality dried-cured meats such as salami, chimney sticks, or landjaeger are some of our favourites.

As for crackers, provide a selection of both plain and artisan styles for your guests. The plain crackers will allow a pleasant, neutral platform on which to showcase the cheese, while an artisan variety, such as the incredibly popular Wine Biscuits out of New York or the Pure Indulgence Flats from Calgary, present a fun and flavourful alternative.

Remember, there are no strict rules here but one: have FUN!

If you have a question regarding anything related to dining, beverages, events, cooking and ingredients, our experts are here with answers.

Visit us at [culinairemagazine.ca](http://culinairemagazine.ca), click on "Contact Us" and ask away! We hope to hear from you soon!