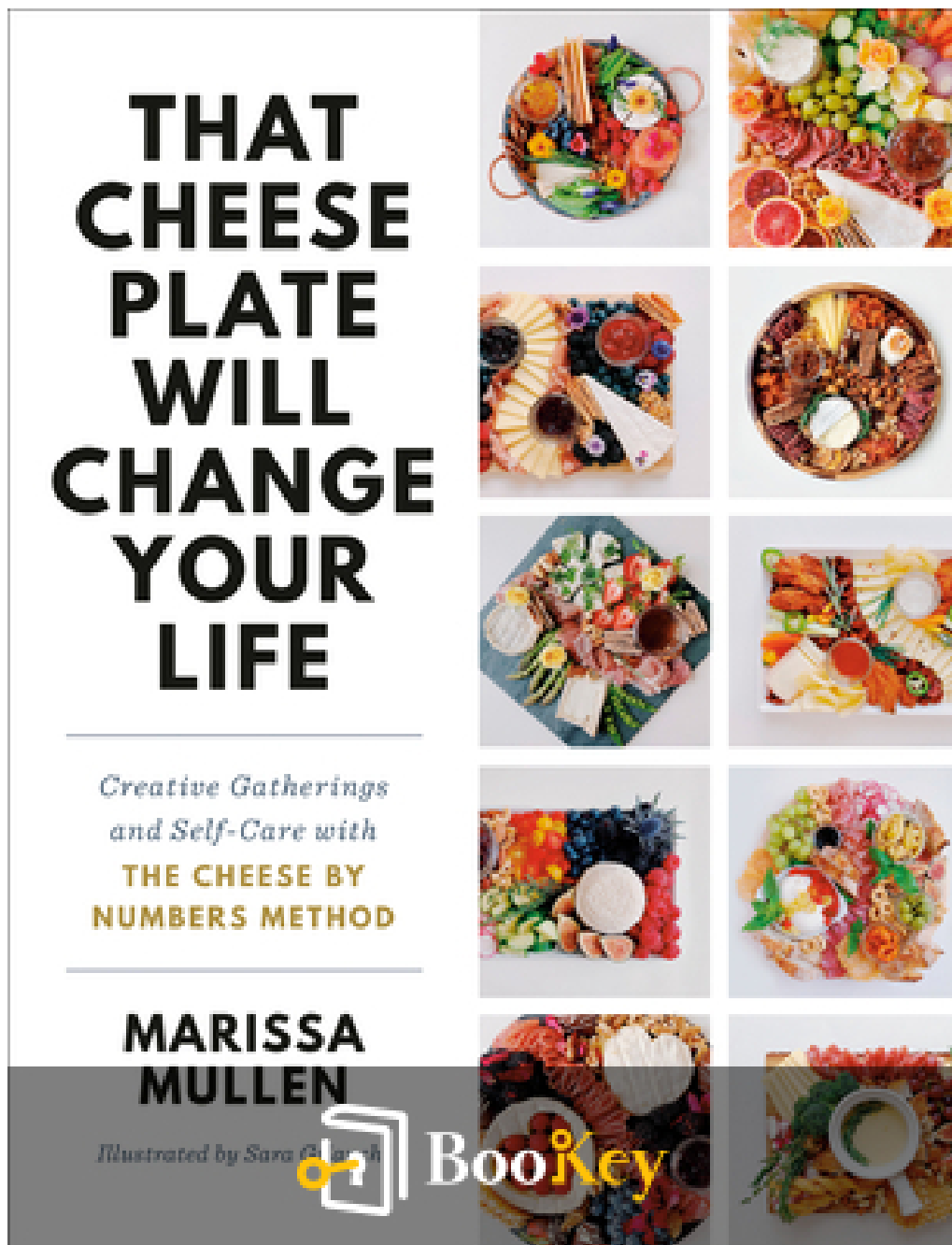


That Cheese Plate Will Change Your Life PDF (Limited Copy)

Marissa Mullen



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That Cheese Plate Will Change Your Life Summary

Transform Gatherings with Beautifully Crafted Cheese Boards

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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About the book

In **That Cheese Plate Will Change Your Life**, Marissa Mullen, the innovative creator behind the popular Instagram accounts @ThatCheesePlate and @CheesebyNumbers, shares her signature Cheese by Numbers method, which revolutionizes the way you can create visually stunning and delicious cheese boards. Mullen's approach simplifies the art of cheese plate assembly by breaking it down into essential components: cheese, meat, produce, crunch, dips, and garnishes. This method not only makes the process approachable but also emphasizes the joy and creativity involved in crafting these culinary displays.

The book celebrates cheese as a connector, bringing people together to share meaningful experiences. Mullen encourages readers to view the process of assembling a cheese plate as both enjoyable and meditative, allowing for personal expression while tapping into the universal love of good food. Alongside detailed instructions and tips, Mullen provides fifty easy-to-follow maps that guide you in creating a variety of visually appealing and flavor-packed cheese plates. Whether you're hosting a dinner party, enjoying a cozy wine night, or indulging in a solo treat, this book serves as your ultimate guide to impressively presenting cheese and ensuring memorable gatherings.

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About the author

In this chapter, we delve into the journey of Marissa Mullen, a celebrated cheese enthusiast and the creator behind the influential Instagram account, **That Cheese Plate**. Marissa's deep-rooted passion for culinary arts has led her to revolutionize casual dining by combining creativity with accessibility, making gourmet experiences attainable for all.

Her debut book, **That Cheese Plate Will Change Your Life**, serves as a comprehensive guide that illuminates the art of assembling exquisite cheese platters and charcuterie boards. Through this work, Marissa shares her innovative approach to food presentation, emphasizing the importance of not just the ingredients themselves but also the joy of sharing them in communal settings.

In the following sections, Marissa offers readers practical insights and tips for constructing visually stunning cheese plates, encouraging the use of simple ingredients to create something extraordinary. This chapter sets the stage for a celebration of culinary creativity, inviting food lovers to explore and enjoy the delightful experiences that beautifully curated food offers, thus changing the way we gather and enjoy meals.

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Chapter 1 Summary: Preparation Is Key

Preparation is Key: The Mind and Mood

Creating a cheese plate is more than just assembling food; it's an opportunity to ground yourself in the moment and appreciate both the flavors and the company you are sharing it with. To foster a mindful experience, take your time during the preparation, perhaps accompanied by soothing music that sets a calming atmosphere. This careful, deliberate process not only enhances enjoyment but also allows for collaboration, making the experience more meaningful. If cheese isn't your preference, consider crafting a cheese-less plate that still highlights various nutritious options, blending indulgence with health-conscious choices.

The Foundation

To successfully build your cheese plate, start with a sturdy flat surface, such as a cheese board or a cutting board. This will serve as the foundation for your culinary display. Incorporate ramekins to contain dips, nuts, and briny items, ensuring everything has its designated place. Preparing elements in advance, such as pre-cutting cheeses or washing and arranging produce, simplifies the assembly process and keeps the experience stress-free.

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When considering how much to serve, keep in mind that the amount of cheese you offer should correspond to the purpose of your gathering. A general guideline suggests providing about 3 ounces of cheese per guest. For various group sizes, consider these recommended plate dimensions:

- An 8" plate is suitable for 2 to 4 people.
- A 10" plate accommodates 4 to 6 people.
- A 12" plate is perfect for 6 to 8 people.
- A 15" plate works for larger gatherings of 8 to 12 people.

For larger groups, remember to replenish the board as needed to keep everyone satisfied.

That Cracker Plate

To enhance your cheese plate, a dedicated cracker plate is crucial. This addition maximizes space and ensures that there is ample accompaniment for the cheese. You have a variety of options at your disposal: flatbread crackers, seeded crackers, baguettes, focaccia, and butter crackers are all excellent choices to complement your cheese selection. By thoughtfully arranging these elements, you create a harmonious and inviting spread that beckons guests to enjoy every bite.



Chapter 2 Summary: 1. Say Cheese

Cheese Plate Ideas for Beginners: A Comprehensive Guide

Creating the perfect cheese platter is a delightful culinary art that allows for a fusion of flavors, textures, and aesthetics. This guide presents a range of cheese plate ideas tailored for beginners, featuring diverse combinations that cater to various tastes and occasions.

Starter Plate

To embark on your cheese platter journey, consider the **Starter Plate**, presented on a rectangular wooden board measuring 11 × 17 inches. It features an enticing trio of cheeses: rich **Manchego**, creamy **Brie**, and sharp **Cheddar**. Sliced **Genoa salami** adds a savory touch, while dried apricots and fresh berries (blackberries, raspberries, blueberries) provide sweetness. For a satisfying crunch, include **pistachios** and mixed nuts alongside **flatbread crackers**. A touch of **fig jam** serves as a delightful dip, and fresh sage enhances the presentation.



Gourmet Flavor Spread

For a more sophisticated experience, the **Gourmet Flavor Spread** uses a 15-inch round wooden lazy Susan to encourage sharing. Delight in the unique flavors of **Comeback Cow**, matured **Marieke Gouda**, and **Cabot Clothbound Cheddar**. Complementing these are slices of **Calabrese** and **prosciutto**. Fresh figs, raspberries, and Castelvetrano olives mingle with dried apricots and blackberries, emphasizing a luxurious experience. Mixed nuts and butter crackers provide texture, while **quince jam** adds a sweet contrast. Fresh thyme garnishes the presentation.

Goat Cheese Plate

Next, the **Goat Cheese Plate** is displayed on a 12 × 12-inch square slate board. Featuring lightly marinated goat cheese varieties like **Truffle Tremor** and **Bonne Bouche**, this plate is complemented by **prosciutto di Parma**. Seasonal produce includes sweet strawberries, crisp sugar snap peas, and tender asparagus. Flatbread crackers and mixed nuts enhance the crunch factor, with organic honey as a delectable dip. The plate is finished with vibrant **yellow mini roses** and fresh thyme for a charming touch.

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French Cheese Plate

Emulating the elegance of French cuisine, the **French Cheese Plate** showcases cheeses such as **Maroilles**, nutty **Comté**, and creamy **Brie Fermier** on a round soapstone board with brass handles. Accompanied by **saucisson** and rich chicken liver mousse, this plate bursts with flavor. Accompanying produce includes tangy cornichons and crispy red radishes, while a crispy French baguette and pistachios provide crunch. A sweet note comes from fresh raspberry jam, garnished with fresh thyme and delicate pink mini roses.

Summer Gathering Plate

Perfect for warm-weather gatherings, the **Summer Gathering Plate** features an assortment on a wooden cutting board (10 × 14 inches). Cheeses like **Midnight Moon** and **Irish cheddar** harmonize with slices of Genoa salami. Burstingly fresh blood oranges and berries (blackberries, blueberries, raspberries) mingle with a crunchy blend of nuts and herb crackers. **Black cherry preserves** act as a delightful dip, while garnishes

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of pink mini roses and fresh rosemary add a pop of color.

Italian Countryside Plate

Transport yourself to Italy with the **Italian Countryside Plate**, elegantly served on a 6 × 10-inch rectangular porcelain dish. This plate highlights creamy **Buffalo mozzarella** paired with roasted tomatoes and a drizzle of balsamic glaze. Thin slices of **prosciutto** are a must, while fresh figs and grape tomatoes enhance its visual appeal. Toasted baguette pieces brushed with olive oil and herbs add a satisfying crunch, accompanied by a rich pesto dip and fresh basil for garnish.

Dairy-Free Plate

For those seeking dairy-free options, the **Dairy-Free Plate** is sure to impress. On a 12-inch round plastic platter, enjoy unique cultured cashew cheeses (**Truffle and Carrot wheels**). Paired with **Barolo salami**, this plate is bursting with colors from dragon fruit, blackberries, and more. Crunchy flatbread crackers and pistachios round out the experience. Fresh thyme and delicate blue thistle flowers provide thoughtful garnish choices.

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Baked Brie Plate

Finally, the **Baked Brie Plate** offers a warm and inviting option. Served in an 8 × 12-inch ceramic baking dish, this plate features decadent baked Brie topped with caramelized pears, toasted walnuts, and pomegranate seeds. Paired with sliced Genoa salami, it also includes fresh fruits like pomegranates, Anjou pears, and Gala apples. Crunch is provided by pepitas and mixed nuts, along with French baguette and flatbread crackers. Garnished with fresh rosemary and thyme, this plate is a perfect centerpiece for any gathering.

Conclusion

The beauty of cheese plates lies in their versatility and the endless combinations of flavors and textures they offer. Feel free to mix and match components to create a personalized cheese experience that showcases your creativity and caters to your guests. Enjoy experimenting with these ideas to discover what delights your palate!

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Chapter 3 Summary: 2. The Salami River and Beyond

Chapter 3 Summary: Cheese Plates and Recipes

In this chapter, the art of creating delightful cheese plates is explored, emphasizing the combination of flavors, textures, and seasonal ingredients tailored for various occasions. Each plate is designed to bring people together, celebrate taste, and showcase creativity in presentation.

Salami River Cheese Plate

A round wooden tray serves as the foundation for this sharing plate. It features rich cheeses like Blue Asiago d'Allevo and Jarlsberg, paired with an assortment of cured meats including Genoa salami, Finocchiona, and Borsellino salami. The plate is complemented with green olives, cornichons, peppadew peppers, and dried apricots, providing vibrant flavors. Wheat crackers, walnuts, almonds, and pistachios add crunch, while a dip of whole-grain mustard offers a savory note, all garnished with fresh rosemary and thyme.

Italian Cured Meats Plate

On an elegant round marble board, this plate showcases the excellence of Italian flavors with Parmigiano-Reggiano and mini mozzarella balls, alongside speck, mortadella, and Prosciutto di San Daniele. Champagne



grapes and Castelvetrano olives introduce sweetness and brininess. Marcona almonds, breadsticks, and taralli crackers bring texture, while a balsamic glaze dip adds richness, enhanced by fresh oregano and basil garnishes.

Vegetarian “Figlami” River Plate

A square slate board presents a vegetarian option featuring creamy Havarti and Gruyère cheeses paired with a unique vegan fig salami infused with pistachio and cinnamon. Seasonal fruits like peaches, fresh apricots, and Rainier cherries provide sweetness, complemented by flatbread crackers and walnuts for crunch. Organic honey serves as a delightful dip, and the plate is beautifully garnished with yellow pansies and fresh thyme.

Farmers' Market Plate

This rectangular wooden board captures the essence of a vibrant farmers’ market, featuring mini mozzarella balls and sharp cheddar alongside Genoa salami and a creative prosciutto-wrapped melon with goat cheese and basil. Mixed fresh fruits such as green grapes, raspberries, and peaches enhance the plate's color and taste. With walnuts and water crackers adding crunch, and strawberry rhubarb jam providing a sweet dip, the garnishes of nasturtiums and fresh herbs bring it all together.

Dinner Cheese Board with Shrimp

Perfect for entertaining, this round lazy Susan presents a seafood twist with feta and grilled Halloumi cheeses, alongside marinated shrimp skewers.



Accompanied by grape tomatoes, limes, Persian cucumbers, watermelon, and jalapeños, the freshness resonates. Marcona almonds and a crusty French baguette provide the essentials for crunch, with the shrimp marinade as a savory dip, garnished with fresh cilantro and zinnias for visual appeal.

Personal Cheese Plate for Picnics

Ideal for a casual outing, this small rectangular glass baking dish features the nutty taste of Comté cheese paired with sliced Genoa salami. Seasonal strawberries, Castelvetrano olives, and dried apricots add fruity flavors, while Marcona almonds, seeded crackers, and walnuts give added texture. Blueberry jam acts as a sweet dip, and fresh thyme and carnations offer a charming garnish.

Charcuterie Plate for New Friends

This round slate board introduces an exciting mix of flavors with Keep Dreaming camembert and Midnight Moon goat gouda. The inclusion of hard salami, Prosciutto di Parma, and Soppressata caters to meat lovers. Dried apricots, blueberries, and blackberries provide sweet contrasts, while almonds and cashews add crunch. Fig jam as a dip and fresh rosemary, along with yellow carnations, serve as an inviting garnish, making it perfect for social gatherings.

Game Day Epic Cheese Plate

For sports enthusiasts, a rectangular plastic tray offers a hearty assortment,



with spicy Pepper Jack and creamy Taleggio cheeses, alongside chorizo and fried chicken wings. Fresh produce like celery, mini sweet peppers, and rainbow baby carrots balance the plate, while spicy almonds and potato chips cater to crunch lovers. A robust buffalo sauce and blue cheese dressing serve as dipping options, garnished with fresh rosemary and chives for added flair.

Featured Recipes

The chapter concludes with a collection of recipes that complement the cheese plates, including:

- Prosciutto-Wrapped Melon with Goat Cheese and Basil
- Grilled Marinated Shrimp Skewers with Feta
- Caprese Skewers with Balsamic Glaze
- That Quick Pickle
- Dark Chocolate-Covered Strawberries

This chapter not only celebrates the assembly of cheeses and their perfect pairings but also encourages creativity in preparation and presentation, making every gathering memorable with delicious spreads that reflect the joy of good food.



Chapter 4: 3. Painting with Produce

Summary of Chapter 4: Creative Cheese Plate Ideas

In this chapter, the author explores an array of imaginative cheese plate concepts designed to suit various occasions and palates. These plates not only highlight diverse cheese varieties but also emphasize the importance of incorporating fresh, seasonal produce and complementary elements to enhance flavor and presentation.

1. Plate Concepts Overview

- **Fresh Grocery Plate** features a rectangular porcelain plate filled with a soft-ripened goat cheese known as Coupole, accompanied by vibrant produce such as grape tomatoes, red radishes, and seasonal fruits like figs and berries. Mixed nuts add a satisfying crunch, while fresh raspberry jam serves as a delightful dip, garnished with thyme and dried thistle flowers for an aromatic touch.

- **Plant-Based Celebration Plate** utilizes a larger rectangular wooden board showcasing various artisanal cashew cheeses, including flavored options like rosemary and truffle. This plate includes a colorful assortment



of fruits and vegetables, gluten-free crackers for crunch, and a mixed-berry jam. Fresh rosemary and dried lavender not only enhance the flavor but also create an inviting look.

- **Farmers' Market Plate** emphasizes rustic charm with a round wooden board featuring Alpine-style cow's milk cheese paired with wild boar salami. Seasonal vegetables such as radishes and Persian cucumbers are complemented by pistachios and gluten-free crackers, drizzled with local honey and garnished with flowering broccolini.

- **Beach Barbecue Plate** embraces a casual outdoor vibe through a round porcelain plate, incorporating marinated goat cheese and Caprese skewers alongside sautéed chicken sausage and grilled vegetables. Sourdough bread adds texture, complemented by a balsamic glaze and garnished with thyme and broccolini for a fresh finish.

- **Autumn Fruits Plate** celebrates the rich flavors of the season with a variety of aged cheeses, Genoa salami, and an assortment of dried fruits. The crunch is provided by trail mix and assorted crackers, and fig jam acts as a lovely dip, garnished with fresh rosemary.

- **Holiday Cozy Plate** invites warmth with aged cheeses and Genoa salami paired with seasonal berries and fruits. Holiday cookies and mixed nuts provide crunch, while a dip of red currant jam, and touches of fresh



rosemary and cinnamon sticks create a festive atmosphere.

- **Romantic Plate** takes a tender approach with a heart-shaped French brie, soppressata, and dark chocolate-covered strawberries. Walnuts and waffle cookies add crunch, complemented by a cherry compote and garnished with dried rose petals, making it perfect for intimate occasions.

2. Crunch Elements Guide

A key component to each plate is the inclusion of varied textures, particularly through crunch elements. The guide offers suggestions on enhancing cheese plates with nuts, seeds, crackers, bread, and sweet treats. Almonds, cashews, and walnuts can be used alongside gluten-free cracker options, providing alternatives for those with allergies.

3. Additional Recipes

Incorporating simple recipes such as **Caprese Skewers**—a classic mix of fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, and basil drizzled with balsamic glaze—adds versatility. Additionally, quick pickles made with fresh vegetables and dill provide a zesty touch, while **Dark Chocolate-Covered Strawberries** offer a sweet, crunchy delight that elevates any gathering.

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Through this chapter, readers are encouraged to embrace creativity and variety in assembling cheese plates, making them appealing for different occasions—whether it’s a festive holiday celebration or a cozy romantic dinner—while celebrating the beauty of fresh, seasonal ingredients.

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Chapter 5 Summary: 4. Carbs Are Your Friend

Summary of Cheese Plates and Accompaniments

This guide presents a curated collection of cheese plates that cater to a variety of tastes and occasions, blending sweet and savory offerings with creative pairings and garnishes.

1. Ultimate Crunchy Showcase

Kick off with a square slate board that presents a nuanced combination of aged cheeses, meats, fruits, and an array of crunchy elements. Featuring 36-month-aged gouda, Cambozola, and Oma cheeses, complemented by prosciutto, dried apricots, and Concord grapes, the plate thrives on texture. DIY flatbread crackers and an assortment of nuts deliver the crunch, while caramelized onion jam provides a savory dip. Dried strawflowers and fresh rosemary elevate the aesthetic.

2. Morning Bagel Platter

Start your day with a wholesome rectangular wooden board displaying French brie and Boursin cheeses alongside smoked salmon and Genoa salami. Accompanied by a colorful array of Persian cucumbers, capers, and

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citrus fruits, it emphasizes freshness. The crunch comes from almonds and mini bagels, with fig jam as a delicious dip. Mini roses and fresh dill enhance the visual appeal.

3. **Pizza Inspired Cheese Plate**

For a unique twist, this round soapstone plate reimagines classic pizza flavors. Mozzarella and Pecorino Toscano cheeses sit alongside prosciutto di Parma and Genoa salami, complemented by grape tomatoes and fresh pineapple. The simplicity of a French baguette adds the crunchy element, while fresh oregano garnishes the dish.

4. **Summer Cheese Plate**

Perfect for warm days, this vibrant round wooden board showcases sharp cheddar and Gruyère cheeses paired with seasonal produce like Rainier cherries, strawberries, and peaches. Crunchy flatbread crackers, walnuts, and pistachios complement the fruits, while red pepper jam serves as a refreshing dip. Yellow pansies and tea roses add a touch of beauty.

5. **Burrata Adventure Plate**

Ideal for creating custom crostini, this lazy Susan features creamy burrata cheese flanked by prosciutto di Parma and coppa, alongside a medley of



fresh produce including radishes, artichokes, and figs. Crunchiness comes from toasted bread and taralli crackers, with a balsamic glaze for dipping and fresh basil garnishing the spread.

6. **Candy Themed Plate**

This whimsical rectangular wooden board offers a playful assortment of sweet treats, featuring triple crème brie and Manchego cheeses.

Accompanied by hard salami and a variety of produce including fresh figs and Gala apples, the dessert-like crunch consists of dark chocolate peanut-butter cups, cookies, and licorice. Quince jam brings a sweet dip, while blue thistle flowers complete the look.

7. **Sweet and Salty Plate**

This round slate board indulges your sweet tooth with Camembert cheese and an assortment of fresh fruits such as strawberries and figs. The crunch elements include dark chocolate, Marcona almonds, and cookies, enhanced by fresh honeycomb as the dip. Fresh thyme and delicate pink carnations offer an elegant finish.

8. **DIY Flatbread Crackers**

Create your own crackers with a simple recipe that combines all-purpose

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flour, salt, sugar, Parmigiano-Reggiano, rosemary, and olive oil. After mixing, roll out the dough, cut it into shapes, and bake until crisp, offering a delightful crunchy addition to any cheese plate.

9. **Cheese and Dip Pairing**

Explore pairings that enhance the cheese experience. Sweet dips, such as jams and honeys, beautifully balance savory flavors, while savory options like hummus and fondue provide exciting contrasts.

10. **Breakfast Board**

Begin your morning right with a round porcelain plate featuring 5-year-aged gouda and cottage cheese complemented by chicken apple sausage and a medley of fresh fruits. Crunchy toasted English muffins and nuts elevate the offering, while orange marmalade and apricot jam serve as sweet dips. Zinnias and fresh sage garnish the plate for a touch of charm.

11. **Pimento Cheese Recipe**

Celebrate Southern flavor with a creamy pimento cheese spread. Mix grated cheddar, cream cheese, mayonnaise, and seasonings with jalapeños and diced pimentos for a versatile dip perfect for any gathering.

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This comprehensive guide ensures that you are well-equipped to create beautifully arranged cheese plates, suitable for sharing with friends and family or entertaining at special occasions.

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Chapter 6 Summary: 5. Spread the Love

Chapter 6 Summary: Cheese Plates and Pairings

In this chapter, the art of creating visually stunning and flavorful cheese plates is explored. Each plate is meticulously arranged, incorporating a variety of cheeses, meats, produce, crunch elements, dips, and garnishes, showcasing how presentation can enhance the dining experience.

Spicy Honey Plate

The journey begins with the **Spicy Honey Plate**, presented on a 10-inch round wooden board. The centerpiece cheese, **Asiago Blue**, offers a tangy contrast to **sliced soppressata**. Accompaniments include **mini sweet peppers**, **baby carrots**, and **grape tomatoes**, while a crunchy mix of **spiced almonds**, **turmeric crackers**, and **pistachios** adds texture. The sweet heat of **spicy honey** serves as the perfect dip, and the plate is elegantly garnished with **fresh rosemary**.

Meze Platter

Next, the **Meze Platter**, a larger 15-inch round board, pairs **fresh feta** cheese with a vibrant collection of **Persian cucumbers**, **red radishes**, **green olives**, and **grape tomatoes**. Instead of meat, it features crunchy **pita chips** a

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nd **baked pita bread**, complemented by dips of **tzatziki** and **homemade hummus**. Fresh herbs like **parsley** and **dill** provide aromatic garnishes that reflect Middle Eastern cuisine's flavors.

Fiesta Plate

The celebration continues with the **Fiesta Plate**, crafted on a 12-inch soapstone board. **Pepper Jack** cheese and **chorizo** evoke a festive spirit, accompanied by **fresh jalapeños**, **mini sweet peppers**, **red radishes**, and **limes**. Crunchy **Marcona almonds** and **tortilla chips** balance the assortment, while **queso** and **guacamole** invite dipping. The vibrant garnishes of **zinnias** and **fresh cilantro** enhance the lively presentation.

Southern Pimento Cheese Plate

Stepping into Southern charm, the **Southern Pimento Cheese Plate** utilizes a rectangular plastic tray filled with **sharp cheddar** and **sliced Genoa salami**. Fresh fruits like **peaches** and **Persian cucumbers** brighten the platter, which also features crunchy **wheat crackers** and various types of crackers. The star, **Southern pimento cheese**, serves as a perfect dip, garnished with **fresh chives** and delicate **baby's breath**.

Autumnal Parmigiano-Reggiano Plate

Transitioning towards the seasonal, the **Autumnal Parmigiano-Reggiano**

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Plate showcases the rich flavors of **White Gold Parmigiano-Reggiano** and **prosciutto di Parma** against a backdrop of **dried apricots, dried cherries, and dried figs**. Crunchy **almonds** and **flatbread crackers** are offered alongside **organic honey** as a dip. Decorated with **dried strawflowers, fresh rosemary, and dried lily petals**, this plate embodies autumnal warmth.

Jam-Inspired Plate

The indulgent **Jam-Inspired Plate** features both **French brie** and **sharp cheddar**, complemented by **prosciutto** and a medley of **berries—blueberries, blackberries, and raspberries**. Crunchiness comes from **walnuts** and **flatbread crackers**, while a trio of jams—**raspberry, cherry compote, and strawberry rhubarb**—invites sweetness. Edible flowers, like **pansies** and **dried strawflowers**, add a whimsical touch.

Fondue Plate

A cozy gathering is suggested by the **Fondue Plate**, which presents **Gruyère cheese** paired with **capocollo** and an array of **fruits and broccoli**. This plate offers crunchy **bread cubes, cheese twists, and waffle cookies**, perfect for dipping into rich **cheese fondue**. **Fresh rosemary** and **thyme** add fragrant accents to enhance the experience.

Tangy Pickle Plate

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The **Tangy Pickle Plate** revolves around a selection of bold cheeses—**Taleggio**, **blue**, and **sharp cheddar**—set against **hard salami** and an assortment of **pickled vegetables** like **red radishes**, **cornichons**, and marinated artichokes. Complemented by a variety of **crunchy options**, including **mixed nuts** and **pretzels**, the plate is served with a range of mustards for dipping.

Breakfast Board

Lastly, the **Breakfast Board** brings morning flavors to life with **5-year-aged gouda** and **cottage cheese**, alongside **chicken apple sausage**. A vibrant variety of **fruits** and crunchy **toasted English muffins** are included, with **orange marmalade** and **apricot jam** for dipping. Decorated with **zinnias**, **fresh sage**, and **nasturtiums**, this plate makes breakfast a delightful experience.

Recipes Highlight

The chapter concludes with recipes for **homemade hummus**, a simple blend of chickpeas and spices, and the **Southern pimento cheese**, a staple Southern dip made with cheddar and cream cheese.

Garnishing Essentials

It emphasizes that garnishing with **fresh herbs** can elevate both flavor and presentation, while the use of **edible flowers** adds an artistic touch. Creativity in decoration is encouraged, allowing hosts to impress their

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guests with beautifully presented cheese plates.

This chapter not only showcases how to create enticing cheese plates but also celebrates the joy of flavorful pairings and the importance of presentation in gourmet dining.

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Chapter 7 Summary: 6. Thyme to Shine

In this captivating collection of gourmet plates, the narrative introduces a series of beautifully arranged platters, each designed to tantalize the taste buds and celebrate the seasons. Each plate is artfully curated, featuring a harmonious blend of cheese, meats, fresh produce, crunch elements, dips, and garnishes that match the theme or occasion.

Spring Picnic Plate: This vibrant plate features a round soapstone base adorned with brass handles. At its heart are creamy goat cheeses—Brie and Midnight Moon (a goat gouda)—paired with speck, a dry-cured ham. Fresh, seasonal produce like sugar snap peas, raspberries, grapefruit, and concord grapes embodies the essence of spring. Crunchy flatbread crackers and nutty almonds provide texture, complemented by a sweet orange marmalade dip. The presentation is enlivened with butterfly pea flowers, fresh rosemary, zinnias, and nasturtiums, evoking the beauty of springtime picnics.

Aromatic Herb Plate: Transitioning to a more earthy theme, this plate is crafted on a round slate board. It brings together the rich flavors of cow's milk camembert (Keep Dreaming) and Comté, alongside Genoa salami. The produce selection includes strawberries, broccoli, sugar snap peas, and green bell peppers, creating a colorful display. Crunchy pepitas add a delightful bite, while organic honey serves as the sweet dip. Fresh herbs—rosemary, sage, mint, and thyme—create an aromatic and herbaceous garnish, perfect



for evoking the smells of a summer garden.

Summer Breeze Plate: Capturing the essence of summer, this smaller marble board is adorned with mini mozzarella balls and fresh feta, complemented by prosciutto. Bright cherry tomatoes, refreshing Persian cucumbers, and Castelvetrano olives enhance the plate with Mediterranean flair. Crunchy pistachios and flatbread crackers provide texture, while strawberry rhubarb jam acts as the sweet dip. Fresh basil and pink carnations round out the plate, embodying the carefree spirit of summer gatherings.

Budget-Friendly Plate: Offering an economical yet delightful option, this porcelain plate combines Gruyère with sliced Genoa salami. Seasonal fruits of blackberries, strawberries, and blueberries bring a burst of color, complemented by mixed nuts and butter crackers for crunch. Raspberry jam serves as a sweet dip, while fresh thyme adds a subtle aromatic touch, proving that deliciousness doesn't have to break the bank.

Lavender Dream Plate: A dreamlike experience unfolds on this round wooden board, where Humboldt Fog and Ossau-Iraty cheeses take center stage. The absence of meat is compensated by a selection of fresh produce, including blackberries, Persian cucumbers, and blueberries. Almonds and freshly baked sourdough bread provide delightful textures. A red currant jam dip balances the flavors, while fresh lavender serves as a fragrant garnish, making it a serene choice for intimate gatherings.



Garden Celebration Plate: This rectangular wooden cutting board celebrates the bounties of a garden feast, showcasing Grand Cru and Havarti cheeses, alongside sliced Genoa salami. A cornucopia of strawberries, Rainier cherries, peaches, and blueberries embodies summer's harvest. Crunchy pistachios and butter crackers add variety, accompanied by a drizzle of organic honey as the dip. Yellow and purple pansies, borage, and fresh thyme garnish the plate, crafting a vibrant centerpiece for any occasion.

Birthday Cheese Cake Plate: A festive creation, this marble plate is designed especially for birthdays, featuring a 4-inch wheel of Humboldt Fog and a smaller goat brie, complemented by prosciutto. The addition of fresh figs, raspberries, and blueberries adds a sweet touch, while mixed nuts offer crunch. Drizzled honey enhances the flavors, and fresh thyme and pink carnations decorate the plate, alongside two cheerful birthday candles to mark the celebration.

Autumnal Mood Plate: As the leaves change, this rectangular wooden board captures the flavors of autumn. A combination of Cambozola and Mimolette cheeses pairs beautifully with fig salami, while Concord grapes, dried apricots, Gala apples, and raspberries reflect the harvest season. Crunchy mixed nuts and seeded crackers provide texture, accompanied by a rich caramelized onion jam dip. Dried strawflowers and lily petals offer a

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rustic garnish, echoing the warm, comforting hues of fall.

This collection of plates not only highlights the beauty of seasonal ingredients but also encourages gatherings—each plate a celebration of flavors inspired by nature’s bounty and crafted for memorable experiences.

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Chapter 8: That Bonus Content

Cheese Pairings for Each Zodiac Sign

In this charming exploration of cheese, each zodiac sign is matched with flavors that reflect its traits.

Aries (March 21–April 19): This fiery sign, known for its bold and adventurous spirit, pairs well with the intensity of strong blue cheese complemented by spicy honey. The contrast symbolizes their dynamic personality—challenging yet sweet.

Taurus (April 20–May 20): The earthy Taurus enjoys the rich, creamy flavor of Harbison camembert served on a crisp baguette. This pairing mirrors their love for comfort and indulgence, making for a satisfying culinary experience.

Gemini (May 21–June 20): Reflective of their dual nature, Gemini finds joy in sharp gruyère paired with fig jam. The tangy cheese and sweet jam exemplify their adaptability and love for a balance of flavors.

Cancer (June 21–July 22): This nurturing sign appreciates freshness, enjoying a pairing of feta with watermelon. It evokes their emotional depth

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and support, creating a light, refreshing experience.

Leo (July 23–August 22): Regal Leo thrives on rich flavors, such as aged Pecorino Toscano accompanied by prosciutto. This luxurious pairing embodies their love for extravagance and the spotlight.

Virgo (August 23–September 22): Known for their meticulous attention to detail, Virgo enjoys Humboldt Fog cheese with fresh figs. This sophisticated combination highlights their appreciation for the finer things in life, embodying both health and indulgence.

Libra (September 23–October 22): The harmonious Libra enjoys cheese fondue served with assorted dips. This communal activity reflects their desire for connection and balance, making it an ideal choice for gatherings.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21): Mysterious and intense, Scorpio pairs Gouda with dark chocolate. The complexity of flavors mirrors their deep nature, combining richness and allure for a powerful experience.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21): Adventurous Sagittarius finds joy in Mozzarella di Bufala paired with roasted tomatoes and basil. This fresh, vibrant combination resonates with their love for travel and exploration of new cultures.

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Capricorn (December 22–January 19): Practical Capricorn enjoys the classic combination of sharp cheddar with apples. This straightforward pairing embodies their grounded nature, balancing simplicity with depth.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18): Innovative Aquarius pairs Coupole cheese with fresh berries, celebrating their quirky and original spirit. The fusion of flavors reflects their uniqueness and forward-thinking approach.

Pisces (February 19–March 20): Dreamy Pisces finds joy in the pairing of Comté cheese with honey, embodying their sweet and romantic side. This harmonious blend reflects their artistic soul and love for beauty.

Creating the Perfect Grazing Table

Crafting an inviting grazing table combines aesthetics and flavor. Start with the basics by using bowls, plates, or ramekins to form a solid foundation. Consider the visual shape of your layout, ensuring that it looks as appealing as it tastes. Adequate preparation time is essential, so plan for an ample selection of food. Finally, add decorative elements such as fresh greens like arugula and garnish dips with herbs or edible flowers to enhance visual intrigue and taste.

Step-by-Step Meze Grazing Table

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To help you build a delightful grazing table, start with a variety of cheeses. Options include mozzarella paired with cherry tomatoes, cheddar, labneh infused with herbs, and feta for a diverse flavor profile.

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Chapter 9 Summary: A Plate for Every Season

In the delightful culinary world, cheese plates reign supreme, providing a versatile canvas to celebrate the flavors of every season. By harnessing seasonal ingredients and themes, cheese aficionados can create stunning cheese boards suitable for any occasion. Below is a season-by-season guide to crafting the perfect cheese plates that reflect the essence of spring, summer, fall, and winter.

Spring Ideas

As nature awakens, spring cheese plates celebrate freshness and vibrant flavors.

1. **That G.O.A.T. Plate:** Featuring delightful goat cheeses, this plate is complemented by tangy fruit preserves and crunchy nuts.
2. **That Plant Party Plate:** Incorporate both cheese and an array of fresh vegetables, creating a colorful and health-conscious spread.
3. **That Farmers' Market Plate:** Seasonal produce takes center stage alongside artisanal cheeses, showcasing a community's best offerings.
4. **That Bagel Morning Plate:** A delightful breakfast option, combining assorted cheeses with bagels and toppings like smoked salmon.
5. **That Pimento Party Plate:** Featuring creamy pimento cheese paired with crackers and pickles, this plate adds a Southern twist.



6. **That Fresh Herbs Plate:** Highlighting herbed cheeses, this plate invites fresh, aromatic elements that enhance the dining experience.
7. **That Lavender Fields Plate:** Inspired by the floral notes of lavender, this plate pairs subtly sweet cheeses with honey and nuts.
8. **That Grow Your Own Garnish Plate:** Focused on edible flowers and homegrown garnishes, encouraging guests to engage in the garnishing process.

Summer Ideas

Summer cheese plates embrace outdoor gatherings, sun-soaked picnics, and refreshing flavors.

1. **That Cheese Party Plate:** A vibrant display of various cheeses, perfect for mingling guests at summer soirées.
2. **That Fresh Mozz Plate:** Showcasing fresh mozzarella with tomatoes and basil, echoing classic Caprese salad flavors.
3. **That Figlami River Plate:** Featuring fig spreads and various cheeses, this plate combines sweet and savory.
4. **That Summer in the City Plate:** Highlighting lighter options suited for sweltering urban days, including fresh fruits and lighter cheeses.
5. **That Grill Night Plate:** Perfectly paired with grilled meats, this plate includes smoked cheeses and charred accompaniments.
6. **That Picnic-to-Go Plate:** Compact and convenient, designed for easy



transport to outdoor events.

7. **That Fresh-Picked Plate:** Celebrating seasonal fruits, this plate incorporates freshly picked items from farmers' markets.
8. **That Beach Picnic Plate:** A light, refreshing assembly perfect for seaside enjoyment, featuring cooling cheeses and hydrating fruits.
9. **That Summertime Snack Plate:** Simple yet delicious snacks that can be enjoyed throughout the day.
10. **That Burrata Bar Plate:** Showcasing creamy burrata cheese with various toppings for guests to customize their flavor experience.
11. **That Meze Platter Plate:** Reflecting Mediterranean influences, this plate includes an array of small bites and cheeses.
12. **That Queso and Guac Plate:** Infused with savory Mexican flavors, pairing cheeses with guacamole and chips.
13. **That Berry-Picking Plate:** Incorporating fresh berries, this plate celebrates summer's fruit bounty.
14. **That Basil and Blooms Plate:** Featuring bright basil and edible flowers to enliven the presentation.
15. **That It's Your Birthday Plate** A festive cheese selection perfect for celebrating special occasions.

Fall Ideas

As leaves turn and the air cools, fall cheese plates invite warmth and heartiness.

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1. **That Back to Basics Plate:** A comforting cheese selection emphasizing classic varieties.
2. **That Italian Countryside Plate:** Celebrating rustic Italian flavors, featuring cured meats and rich cheeses.
3. **That Nice to Meat You Plate** A charcuterie-focused option, pairing various meats with complementary cheeses.
4. **That Autumn Spice Plate:** Incorporating seasonal spices like nutmeg and cinnamon, enhancing fall flavors.
5. **That Quick Pickle Plate:** Featuring pickled vegetables alongside cheeses, adding tang and crunch.
6. **That Essential Crunch Plate:** This plate highlights texture, pairing cheeses with crunchy crackers and roasted nuts.
7. **That Deconstructed Pizza Plate:** Inspired by pizza, offering cheeses and toppings separately for custom combinations.
8. **That Treat Yourself Plate** Indulging in richer, creamier cheeses that are perfect for fall evenings.
9. **That Hot Honey Plate:** Featuring spicy honey as a drizzle, this plate adds a delicious kick to classic cheeses.
10. **That Tangy Taste Plate** Emphasizing tangy cheeses that complement seasonal accompaniments.
11. **That Cheap but Classy Plate:** Accessible ingredients that still maintain an air of sophistication.
12. **That Foliage Plate:** A visually stunning plate reflecting fall colors



with rich cheeses and vibrant sides.

Winter Ideas

Winter cheese plates provide warmth, richness, and festive joy, making them perfect for holiday gatherings.

1. **That J'adore Fromage Plate:** A celebration of romantic cheeses, ideal for cozy evenings.
2. **That Brie Mine Plate:** Highlighting luscious brie paired with sweet and savory elements.
3. **That Salami River Plate:** Offering generous portions of salami with complementary cheeses for savory indulgence.
4. **That Game Day Plate:** Perfect for sporting events, this plate combines hearty snacks with crowd-pleaser cheeses.
5. **That Fireside Plate:** Cozy and warm, featuring cheeses that melt beautifully for a comforting experience.
6. **That Season of Love Plate:** Evoking the romantic spirit of the season with decadent choices.
7. **That Sweet Tooth Plate:** Introducing dessert cheeses and sweet options, appealing to those with a sweet craving.
8. **That Sweet Little Parm Plate:** Focused on aged Parmigiano-Reggiano and its complementary sides, celebrating bold flavors.
9. **That Après-Ski Plate:** Designed for post-skiing relaxation, featuring



hearty, warming cheeses and hot beverages.

By embracing seasonal ingredients and themes, each cheese plate not only tantalizes the taste buds but also captures the essence of the moment, making every gathering special.

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Chapter 10 Summary: Coming Full Circle

Chapter 10 Summary: Coming Full Circle

Creating a cheese plate transcends mere culinary preparation; it becomes an avenue for self-expression, mindfulness, and connection. Embracing the innovative Cheese By Numbers method, individuals are encouraged to craft personalized cheese plates that reflect their unique tastes and passions, transforming an act once reserved for special occasions into an everyday celebration of sensory experiences. The focus lies on immersing oneself in the diverse textures, flavors, and aromas that various cheeses offer.

Choosing Your Cheese

The journey begins with selecting the right cheeses. This chapter provides an overview of cheese types, categorized by textures from fresh to hard, and details the different kinds of milk used—cow, goat, sheep, buffalo, and even plant-based alternatives. Readers are urged to explore these varieties, emphasizing the rewarding experience of expanding one's palate.

The Therapeutic Art of Cutting Cheese

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Cutting cheese is highlighted as an exercise in mindfulness. The chapter discusses the different cheese knives suitable for various textures and types, encouraging individuals to embrace this preparation as a therapeutic practice, savoring the unique experiences each cheese brings as they cut and arrange it on the plate.

Incorporating Meat

Once the cheese foundation is established, the attention shifts to adding cured meats. The importance of balancing flavors and textures is underscored, introducing the aesthetically pleasing concept of a "Salami River," where meats are artfully arranged to enhance visual appeal and deepen flavor pairs.

Presenting Produce

Fruits and vegetables play a vital role in complementing the cheese and meat selections, adding vibrant color and fresh balance to the plate. The chapter encourages sourcing these fresh ingredients from local farmers' markets, providing tips for thoughtful preparation and presentation that highlight seasonal produce.



The Crunch Factor

To create a harmonious texture contrast, the inclusion of crunchy elements—such as nuts, crackers, and breads—is deemed essential. This chapter also suggests incorporating sweet treats to elevate the experience further, adding delightful surprises that enhance the overall enjoyment.

Dips and Spreads

Dips are proposed as significant enhancers of the cheese plate experience, offering sweet and savory contrasts that enrich each bite. Readers are encouraged to experiment with various pairings, blending classic favorites with adventurous options to inspire creativity and personalization.

The Final Touch: Garnishes

The culmination of the cheese plate comes with garnishes like fresh herbs and edible flowers, which serve as a beautiful finishing touch that not only enhances visual appeal but also enriches flavor. Attention to detail emerges as a key theme—transforming a simple cheese plate into an impressive

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culinary display.

Ultimately, this chapter invites readers to engage actively in the process of creating cheese plates, framing it not just as a dining experience but as an opportunity to connect with others, celebrate one's creativity, and relish the joy of the present moment shared with loved ones.

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