



CHEESE PAIRING GUIDE



CHEDDAR STYLE CHEESE

Cheddar is a very diverse cheese, ranging in color from pale-yellow to orange and can range in flavor profile from mellow to sharp depending on the process and added ingredients. For purposes of pairing, we'll refer to bold Cheddar; this type of Cheddar tends to be more crumbly and crystallized in appearance from having been aged longer than 6 months. Cheddar will pair well with many salami products, particularly those with earthy flavor profiles (i.e. Tartufo, Wild Boar, and Napoli).

BLOOMY RIND CHEESE

Brie, named after the French region it comes from, is typically pale and sometimes grey or off-white in color. This cheese is an unpasteurized cheese, with roots in France, although many other varieties exist today. The flavor character of Brie and other bloomy rind cheeses vary largely on ingredients and conditions in which it is made. Spicy salamis such as Chorizos and Toscano (fennel) pair well with these soft cheeses.



SEMI-HARD CHEESE

Originating from the Netherlands, Gouda is one of the more common cheeses you'll find today. With a yellow color and a firmness ranging from slightly hard to very hard, it's regarded as one of the oldest cheese. Gouda ranges in aging anywhere from 4 weeks to over a year. In the older varieties, Gouda will develop a slight caramel or sweetness to it and pairs well with bold flavored meats such as Chorizo, Napoli, and Calabrese.

SEMI-SOFT CHEESE

Semi-soft cheeses like Appalachian (Virginia), Tomme De Savoie (France), Toma Piemontese (Italy) have changed a great deal over the years. Showcasing the milk, semi-soft cheeses are lightly cooked, pressed-curd cheese and typically aged. Flavor profiles include evoke cream and butter with a mushroom earthiness. Semi-soft cheeses are excellent on a cheese plate or on bread. It melts beautifully and can be used in a variety of dishes.





BLUE (OR BLEU) CHEESE



Blue (or bleu) is a very robust cheese. Serve it alone as an appetizer or slice for your cheese board; add crackers and a savory or sweet tapenade. Crumble and melt this cheese on a protein it reacts to heat beautifully. Served on omelets and paninis, it also pairs exquisitely with meats of all kinds, including grilled steak.

GOAT CHEESE

Goat Cheese (or Chevre) has very unique flavor profiles with earth-like tones and sometimes tart or tangy flavors. This cheese comes in many shapes and sizes, ranging from soft to hard and from logs to pyramids. Goat Cheese is lactose-free, unlike the cow cheeses listed above. The flavors are suited for a mix of different salami options including classic pepperoni, garlic-flavored and even mild-flavored options such as Molisana and Norcino.



COMMON PRINCIPLES OF CHEESE PAIRING

- Texture matters. A floppy, mushy, or semi-soft cheese alongside a buttery thin slice of meat lacks necessary contrast.
- Acidity matters. In some cases, it's the cheese, in others it's the meat. But one element needs to contribute some sensation of tart, citrusy, mouthwatering brightness to cut the fat and protein of the other.
- When it comes to cheese and cured meats, success is all about opposites. Complementary flavors concentrate and focus on what's shared when you can rely on other elements for contrast.

OTHER TIPS

- Always unwrap and allow your cheese to come to room temperature before serving. The aromatic and complex flavors of cheese don't really begin to appear until the cheese is at room temperature. Cheese that's chilled to refrigerator temperatures (roughly 35°F) is simply not as tasty.
- Don't crowd the cheese board. Allow room to cut. If necessary, buy a bigger cheese board, or put cheeses on multiple boards.
- Serving cheese should be easy, not fussy; it should be fun, not stressful. Relax and let your guests enjoy themselves!