

The perfect cheeseboard

Follow our simple tips and round off Christmas lunch in style.

How much should I serve per person? If you're serving cheese as a dessert, you should allow around 50-75g per person.

How many cheeses to serve?

Most experts recommend three to five different cheeses. Always include a hard cheese, such as cheddar or gruyère, a soft cheese such as camembert or brie and a blue cheese, such as stilton. A goat's cheese brings a palate-cleansing freshness to the proceedings and the fifth cheese can be your wild card – a crumbly wensleydale perhaps, or a ripe, pungent époisses.

What accompaniments should I serve? Grapes, apples and pears are good fruit options and honey, chutneys and quince paste all complement different cheeses.

Charcoal crackers are a good call, or you could take a lead from the French and serve crusty bread.

Chilled or room temperature?

Cheeses develop their full flavours at room temperature – remember to take them out of the fridge an hour in advance.

Any other tips? Always start with the mildest, softest cheese, then try the semi-hard or hard cheese and end with the blue.

And make sure you have separate knives for each. You won't be able to taste the brie if you cut it with the same knife you're using for the stilton.

1. Ocado Black Seedless Grapes 500g £2 (40p per 100g) Eating a grape helps to cleanse the palate between different cheeses.

2. The Garlic Farm Pear & Date Chutney 300g £4.25 (£1.42 per 100g) Fruity with a garlic and chilli kick – great with cheese.

3. Alex James No 2.1 Blu 200g £4.49 (£2.25 per 100g) This melt-in-the-mouth creamy blue cheese from Northern Italy is softer than most blue cheeses.

4. Alex James No 4.1 Goat Log 100g £2.39 A delicious creamy goats' cheese with a lovely lemony sweetness.

5. The Cheshire Cheese Company Santa's Lump of Coal 200g £4 (£2 per 100g) Charcoal cheddar that will definitely be a talking point.

6. Nettlebed Creamery Bix 150g £4.19 (£2.79 per 100g) Triple cream, mould-ripened soft cheese, which won Gold and Best Organic Cheese at the British Cheese Awards 2019.

7. Crackers from a selection at ocado.com

8. Waitrose No1 Witheridge 100g £4.49 (£4.49 per 100g) A semi-hard cheese aged in hay with grassy and fruity elements.

9. Wyke Farm Simply Gorgeous Vintage Cheddar 320g £2.50 (78p per 100g) This strong cheddar is a multi award winner.

★ **Thomasina's pick**

