

# How to put together a cheese board

We asked local experts for their advice.

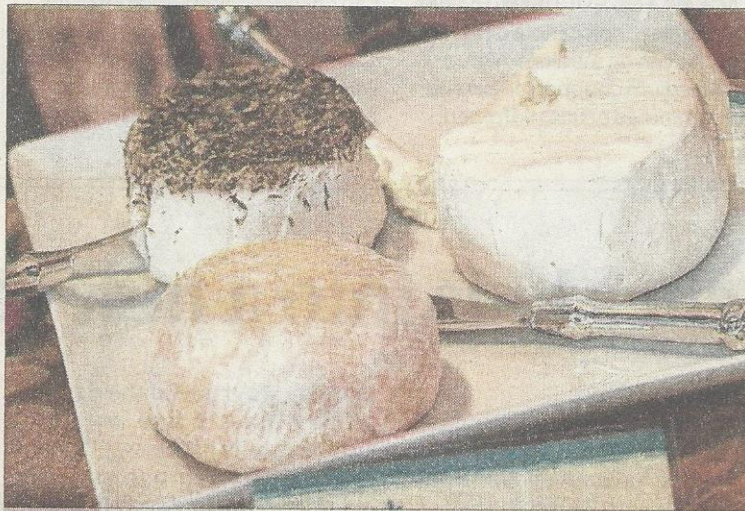
**By Susan Dalzell**  
Contributing Writer

Cheese can be a delicious way to add some panache to your next dinner or cocktail party. Your guests will thank you, trust me.

Forget cubes of sweaty orange cheddar or those tubs of processed cheese product. I'm talking real cheese, the stuff made the old-fashioned way from French goats or English cows or even cured to perfection right here in Ohio.

More and more local retailers now offer well-stocked cheese shops. To name a few, try visiting Arrow Wine and Spirits in Kettering and Springboro; Earth Fare in Centerville; Trader Joe's in Kettering; Jungle Jim's International Market in Cincinnati; Dorothy Lane Market in Oakwood, Centerville and Springboro; and the Murray's cheese stores inside many Kroger stores.

I tend to get overwhelmed when faced with a giant case



A cheese plate can be a welcome addition to almost any party or social gathering. CONTRIBUTED

stuffed with cheeses marked by fancy labels, so I sought out local experts for advice on preparing my own cheese board. Chef Carrie Walters and Head Cheese Manager Erika Cuellar, both with Dorothy Lane Market, gave me a few pointers.

You can always do the same in a store. Cheesemongers enjoy questions, both women assured me. "Don't feel like you have to know exactly what you want when you come in,"

Cuellar said.

She'll even offer samples to ensure you leave with cheese you know you'll enjoy. "We always encourage people to try the cheese first," she said.

The cheese:

Both experts said serving three to five cheeses is ideal. You can mix and match countries of origin, or pick a region and stick with it.

For three cheeses, Walters suggested:

## HOW TO GO

**What:** The Cheese Show, a chance to sample more than 50 cheeses, meet artisan cheese makers and enjoy cheese-related appetizers

**When:** 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday

**Where:** Dorothy Lane Market, 740 N. Main St., Springboro

**Tickets:** \$40 each.

**Info:** [www.dorothylane.com/registration/cheeseshow.plx](http://www.dorothylane.com/registration/cheeseshow.plx)

## RECIPES INSIDE TODAY'S LIFE

Every Wednesday in Life, you will find recipes and cooking advice to inspire every at-home cook. Inside today's life section, we offer you several recipes to try at home.

■ Something salty. (Try a Gruyere or a Gouda. Walter's favorite is a Dutch cheese called Vincent.)

■ Something creamy. (Brie or Camembert.)

■ Something blue or smelly. (Walter's favorite: Bleu d'Auvergne.)

**Cheese** continued on D8



# Serve a mix of flavors

## Cheese

continued from D1

For five cheeses, Cuellar recommended:

- A soft goat's cheese (Tip: Also called Chevre.)
- A cheddar. (Cuellar's favorite: 1833 Vintage Reserve Cheddar.)
- A blue cheese. (Stilton or Gorgonzola.)
- A semi-hard cheese. (Aged Gouda.)
- A soft, ripened cheese. (Brie or Camembert.)

## The accompaniments

Man shall not live by cheese alone.

Picking the right nibbles to serve with your cheese can really help to pull out the cheeses' flavors.

Crackers (pick sturdy ones) and/or French baguettes are must-haves, but Walters suggested also serving something savory and something sweet.

### Sweet:

- Fruit (Slices of apples or pear.)
- Honey. (Drizzle directly onto cheese or along edge of board for dipping.)
- Balsamic syrup. (Reduce by half and drizzle. Tip: Perfect for Parmigiano-Reggiano.)

### Savory:

- Chutney
- Olive Tapenade
- Nuts. (Pecans are a good choice.)

### The refreshments:

Selecting the right drinks can be tricky.

Although wine is the classic beverage, both experts said beer can pair very well with a lot of cheeses.

This fall, try a sparkling cider. You could also go

fancy: "Champagne pairs with almost all cheeses," Walters said.

For nonalcoholic options, consider crisper sodas, like a dry ginger ale.

### The event:

Get the cheese out of the fridge 45 minutes to an hour before serving it, Cuellar said.

"Cheese is always best served at room temperature. Otherwise, the cold numbs the flavor," she said.

You can purchase a traditional cheese board or get creative and serve the cheese on everything from a plank of wood to a large piece of granite.

Or, skip the board all together and pre-plate the cheese. If you plan on serving cheese often, invest in a set of cheese knives; they're probably less expensive than you think.

"It's also always nice to use a marker to let people know the names of the cheeses," Walters said. Chalkboard markers are great since they are reusable.

Afterward, if there's any cheese left over, wrap it tightly in clear plastic and put it in the veggie drawer in the bottom of your fridge, Cuellar said.

I like to graze on leftover cheese for several days, but a more ambitious cook can create something special with all those cheese bits.

"I love to make a cheese béchamel sauce for a wonderful mac and cheese meal," Walters said.

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## 'Champagne pairs with almost all cheeses.'

**Chef Carrie Walters**  
Dorothy Lane Market