WINE PARTY GUIDE

SO YOU’RE HOSTING A WINE PARTY...
Hosting a wine, cheese and charcuterie party is a great way to explore different wine varietals, cheeses and charcuterie types and the wonderful combinations that they can create. Oberon Wines has everything you need to host an exciting party for you and your friends! Here are a few quick tips and ideas to inspire you:

| Occasion: What is the purpose of the party? |
| Name & Contact Details: Host(s) name and contact information (email and phone number) |
| Date & Time: When is the party? |
| Location: Name of venue and full address |
| RSVP: Set an RSVP deadline |
| Proper Attire: Casual or more formal? |
| What To Bring: Should guests provide anything? |

AROUND THE WORLD
Choose food and wine from various corners of the world. Compare and contrast wines, cheeses and charcuterie to see how their region of origin affects the palate.

WHAT GROWS TOGETHER GOES TOGETHER
Provide wines, cheese and charcuterie from one specific region to see how the flavors complement each other.

PICK A STYLE
Focus on one specific type of wine, cheese or charcuterie and explore the variations between varietal, region, producer, etc.

BYOCC (BRING YOUR OWN CHEESE & CHARCUTERIE)
Ask each guest to bring their favorite cheese, wine or charcuterie to broaden the spectrum of flavors.

THINGS TO CONSIDER
Once you’ve chosen a focus, consider how you want to present the event to guests. A few extra details can go a long way for a fun and exciting wine and cheese tasting.

SET THE TONE
Will the party be a casual, walk around tasting for guests to explore different pairings? Or will it be a more formal sit down, guided tasting for a more unified experience?

GET CREATIVE
Choose decorations to set the mood. Chalkboard signs, slate or wooden platters, floral arrangements and other details are perfect accents to enhance your party.

SEND THE INVITE
Sending out an invitation is an important step to hosting a successful party. Follow this simple checklist to provide guests with everything they need to know:

“Be adventurous, offer variety, and think outside the box.” - Mark Pastore, Boccalone

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BUYING GUIDE

The most exciting part of planning your party is shopping for your wine, cheese and charcuterie. Follow this quick guide to ensure that you have everything you need for your event.

ACCOMPANIMENTS
Accompaniments are crucial to the success of your party. Have fun and experiment with textures and flavors to discover what you like.

BREAD AND CRACKERS
Simple, crusty breads and plain crackers are the best choice. Avoid flavored crackers and breads that may overpower or compete with the wine, cheese and charcuterie.

FRUIT
Fresh fruits like pears, apples, grapes, figs, oranges, melons, and pomegranate make great pairings. Add dried fruit to your platter for a wider range of flavor. Use the fruit to enjoy with your cheese and charcuterie, and help identify notes and flavors of the wine.

OLIVES
Include a variety of black and green olives, washed of their brine and dressed as is customary for their particular type and region of origin.

NUTS
Toasted and raw almonds, walnuts, and hazelnuts are a fantastic addition to your plate, as they help bring out the notes in the cheeses and charcuterie.

CHUTNEYS & CONDIMENTS
The sweetness of chutneys and fruit spreads helps to contrast the tangy and salty flavor of the cheese and charcuterie. Mustard makes an excellent pairing with charcuterie.

HONEY
The complex flavors of honey make it a fantastic accompaniment for many cheeses.

PICKLED ITEMS
Pickled fruit and vegetables offer a tangy flavor that helps cut through the richness of the meat.

“Look for complimentary and contrasting flavors. Beware any accompaniments that will overpower!”
- Jill Giacomini Basch, Pt. Reyes Cheese Company

BUYING YOUR WINE
Serve 3-4 different wine varietals, allowing guests to mix and match pairings to discover their favorite combinations.

BUYING YOUR CHEESE & CHARCUTERIE
Serve 4-5 types of cheeses and charcuterie that offer a variety of texture, age, composition (meat and milk), and appearance. Serve at least 1 traditional cheese and charcuterie for everyone to enjoy. Safe selections are cheddar or gouda for cheese, and prosciutto and salami for charcuterie.

Tip: Buy your cheeses and charcuterie cut to order and the day prior to your event, so they are fresh and ready to enjoy!

ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST
- Wine glasses, cork screws and bottle openers
- Napkins, plates and utensils
- Cheese/Charcuterie boards, cheese knives (1 per cheese)
- Serving forks, spoons and knives for jams and spreads
- Plates and/or bowls for accompaniments
- Ice, ice bucket, ice tongs
- Garbage can and bags
- 4-5 different cheeses, including one common variety
- 3-4 wine varietals
- 4-5 different charcuterie, including one common variety
- Assorted accompaniments
Choosing the right equipment is essential to a successful tasting. From glassware to knives, enjoy this quick guide to finding the right supplies for your event.

### THE GLASSWARE

Enjoy this comprehensive guide to finding the right glassware for your favorite varietals. You don’t need a unique glass to have an amazing wine experience. Choosing a universal glass, like Bordeaux or Burgundy, is a great way to utilize one glass per person for the entire tasting.

**SIZE AND SHAPE OF THE BOWL**

Red wine glasses have a larger, deeper bowl, which allows the wine’s aromas to better circulate and manifest themselves. The more narrow openings of white wine glasses allow for the bouquet to gather and accentuate the drinking experience.

**STEM LENGTH**

The stem of a wine glass allows you to hold the glass without interfering with the wine’s temperature. If a wine becomes too warm the aromas and flavors can become muted.

### THE HARDWARE

It’s important to have a unique knife for each cheese to avoid mixing the flavors. Basic kitchen and butter knives will work perfectly for your tasting; however, this complete guide has everything you need to know about specialized cheese cutlery.

1. **FORK-TIPPED SPEAR**: Use for a variety of firm cheeses. The fork tip can be used for serving.
2. **HARD CHEESE KNIFE**: Can be used to cut any hard cheese.
3. **GORGONZOLA KNIFE**: For use on Gorgonzola and blue cheeses. Use the sharp blade to cut into wheels and wedges and the rounded tip to easily spread on crusty breads and crackers.
4. **OPEN WORK BLADE KNIFE**: Use to cut bloomy/soft rind cheeses.
5. **RIND CUTTER**: Scores the rinds of hard cheeses quickly and neatly.
6. **FLAT SPATULA KNIFE**: Used for cutting away excess rind and dividing small wedges.
7. **ALMOND KNIFE**: Perfect for scoring the rind of hard cheese, opening wheels, dividing wedges and cutting cheeses into bite-sized pieces.
8. **SPADE**: Use to cut wedges and chunks of hard cheeses.
9. **SOFT CHEESE KNIFE**: Use this knife to spread soft cheeses on crackers and other accompanying foods.
10. **CHEESE FORK**: Holds a block of cheese in place while you slice with a knife. Ideal for breaking hard, aged cheeses or softer, crumbly cheeses.
11. **FLAT CHEESE KNIFE**: Used for cutting crumbly soft cheese or shaving, chopping and cubing firm cheeses.
12. **NARROW PLANE KNIFE**: Cuts a wide variety of cheeses from semi-firm cheeses like Cheddar to soft cheeses such as Brie.
Setting up for your party can be simple and fun! Enjoy these quick tips to help take the stress out of the day, allowing you to enjoy the good food, good company and great wine!

**PARTY SETUP**

- Set up essentials, such as napkins, glasses, utensils and serving ware, chairs and tables
- Strategically set up trash cans for easy cleanup
- Prep any food items that you may be cooking and refrigerate if possible

**3-4 HRS PRIOR**

- Put out any decorations, such as flowers, signs, unscented or flameless candles
- Place white, sweet and sparkling wines in refrigerator to chill
- Set up a music playlist to enjoy at the party!
- Run dishwasher so sink is empty

**2-3 HRS PRIOR**

- Set out hard cheeses, charcuterie and red wines to bring to room temperature
- Begin to set out basic accompaniments such as nuts and breads
- Begin to clean up, such as emptying trash can, putting dishes away, and tidy party area

**1 HR PRIOR**

- Set out soft cheeses to bring to room temperature
- Set out remaining accompaniments, such as deli meats, fruits, jams, and honey
- Place white, sparkling, and sweet wines in ice bucket(s)
- Open red wines to allow to breathe
- Put out any remaining refrigerated items
- Greet guests with glass in hand!

**30 MIN PRIOR**

**ENJOY THE PARTY**

**SIGNs AND CARDS**

Create signage to help guests to specify each wine, cheese and charcuterie accompaniments. Tasting mats and tasting cards are also a great way to track each tasting so that guests can remember their favorite and least favorite pairings.

**SERVING TEMPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>WINE TYPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68°F</td>
<td>CHEESE &amp; CHARCUTERIE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60°F - 65°F</td>
<td>FULL-BODIED RED WINES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55°F - 60°F</td>
<td>LIGHT RED WINES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50°F - 55°F</td>
<td>FULL-BODIED WHITE WINES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45°F - 50°F</td>
<td>LIGHT WHITE WINES &amp; PÂTÉ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45°F - 55°F</td>
<td>SWEET WINES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42°F - 52°F</td>
<td>SPARKLING WINES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Soft-ripened, semi-hard, hard and blue cheeses should always be served at room temperature. Fresh soft cheeses can be enjoyed slightly colder than room temp. If cheese is cold, you won’t be able to enjoy its proper texture and taste the complex layers of flavor.”

- Jill Giacomini Basch, Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company

“Allowing the meat to come to room temperature opens up flavors, aromas and textures.”

- Taylor Boetticher, Fatted Calf

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Create a statement and wow guests with a beautiful tablescape of delicious wine, cheese and charcuterie. Enjoy these quick tips and ideas on what types of cheese and charcuterie to offer. Most importantly, have fun and be adventurous when setting your party table.

**BUILDING YOUR BOARD**

**BE ADVENTUROUS**
In addition to offering the safer choices, include a few unknown cheeses and charcuterie to broaden your guests' horizons.

**MIX & MATCH**
Individual platters may feature similar items, such as hard cheeses or sausages, or feature recommended pairings to help guide guests. Place accompaniments next to items they pair well with, thus providing guidance to your guests.

**VARIETY**
Offer 3-4 different types of wine, cheese and charcuterie that vary in flavor, allowing guests to explore and discover their favorites.

**COLOR & TEXTURE**
Select food items that vary in texture, from the firm sausages to the smoother pâté to the crusty breads. Create visual appeal by grouping items so that they contrast in color.

**FLAVORS**
Offer a range of flavors, including smoky, spicy, salty, sweet, and tart, allowing guests to mix and match combinations.

**KEEP IT CLEAN**
Avoid crowding strong cheeses and charcuterie together so the flavors don’t mix. Offer different glasses for red and white wines, so that guests may try different types without blending varietals.

**BOARD ESSENTIALS**

**CHEESES**
Common types include Ricotta, Brie, Fontina, Cheddar, Gouda, and Gorgonzola.

**CHARCUTERIE**
Common types include Pepperoni, Proscuitto, Speck, Jamón, Salami Piccante, Chorizo.

**BREAD AND CRACKERS**
Offer simple, crusty breads and plain crackers.

**FRUIT**
Pears, apples, grapes, figs, oranges, melons, pomegranate are excellent options.

**NUTS & OLIVES**
Offer an assortment of black and green olives, almonds, and walnuts.

**HONEY, CHUTNEYS & CONDIMENTS**
Honey, sweet chutneys, fruit spreads, and mustard are common pairings.

**PICKLED ITEMS**
Pickled fruit and vegetables are delicious with many different types charcuterie.

**IF YOU LIKE....**
Unsure of where to start? Try these delicious recommendations based on your existing preferences.

**CHEDDAR:** Gouda, Swiss, Colby, Havarti, Dry Jack

**SWISS:** Dry Jack, Brie, Gruyere

**MOZZARELLA:** Brie, Goat, Ricotta

**BACON:** Jamón Ibérico, Speck

**PROSCUITTO:** Smoked Ham, Serrano Ham, Jamón Ibérico

**PEPPERONI:** Spicy Sopressata, Smoky Chorizo, Saucisson Sec

“You should always include a variety of textures, techniques and flavor profiles”
- Taylor Boetticher, Fatted Calf

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PAIRINGS

WINE PARTY GUIDE

WINE PAIRINGS
Pairing wine, cheese and charcuterie doesn’t have to be a formal or intimidating experience, it should be fun and delicious! Take the time to understand basic pairings with these simple rules.

WHITE WINES
White wine is very versatile with low tannins and crisp acidity.
Cheeses: Goat Cheese, Triple Cream Cheese, Mozzarella
Charcuterie: Mortadella, Lonza, Salmon Rillette, Duck Rillette, Salame Cotto.

SWEET WINES
Sweet wines are wonderful ways to offset tangy or pungent foods.
Cheeses: Blue Cheese, Gorgonzola, Muenster
Charcuterie: Pâté

SPARKLING WINES
Sparkling wines are very versatile, with the bubbles bringing out flavors in a range of foods.
Cheeses: Parmigiano-Reggiano, Goat Cheese
Charcuterie: Pâté, Rillete, Fatty Meats

RED WINES
Red wines, such as Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, have ripe, red fruit flavors and soft to bold tannins.
Cheeses: Wash Rind Cheeses, Aged Cheeses, Blue Cheese
Charcuterie: Pork Salami, Chorizo, Lomo, Sbricolona

OBERON SAUVIGNON BLANC
The zesty, fresh flavors, and rich complexity is a perfect pairing for foods with brighter acidity.
Cheeses: Goat Cheese, Triple Cream Cheese, Mild Cheddars, Gouda, Fresh Mozzarella
Charcuterie: Mortadella, Lonza, Salmon Rillette

OBERON CHARDONNAY
Balanced fruit, lingering acidity and rich flavors
Cheeses: Goat Cheese, Triple Cream Brie, Soft Cows Milk Cheese
Charcuterie: Duck Rillette, Salame Cotto, Mortadella

OBERON MERLOT
Dense fruit flavors and soft tannins is the perfect match for flavorful or light dishes and aged, harder cheeses.
Cheeses: Gruyere, Swiss, Provolone, Fontina, Brie, Camembert, Mild Wash, Rind Cheeses
Charcuterie: Pork Salami, Chorizo, Lomo, Sbricolona

OBERON CABERNET SAUVIGNON
Rich, complex flavors, textures and medium tannins pair wonderfully with fattier food items, savory dishes, and aged cheeses.
Cheeses: Blue Cheese, Aged Cheddar, Aged Gouda, Aged Gruyere, Hard Wash Rind Cheeses, Gorgonzola
Charcuterie: Chorizo, Sbricolona, Pâté Maison, Pork Salami

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From the conventional to the unconventional, the pleasure in enjoying wine, cheese and charcuterie together is to discover your own favorite combinations. Enjoy these general guidelines to get started:

**PAIRINGS GUIDELINES**

**WHAT GROWS TOGETHER GOES TOGETHER**
Wine, cheese, and charcuterie from the same region will often make excellent pairings, as they reflect the culture and terroir of the area.

**WHEN TO COMPLEMENT**
Pair wines with cheeses and charcuterie that have similar balance, strength of flavor, body, acidity, tannins, and texture. Great pairings should complement each other to enhance shared characteristics rather than compete in flavor and texture.

**WHEN TO CONTRAST**
Contrasting strength and tannins will help balance the characteristics in the wine, cheese and charcuterie. Pairing aged cheeses and fattier charcuterie with a bold, full-bodied red wine will help balance the tannins and let the fruit shine through. Or pair a crisp and acidic Sauvignon Blanc with a Triple Cream Brie and more delicate charcuterie to balance the textures for a fantastic pairing.

**WHAT TO AVOID**
Avoid pairing lighter, creamy cheeses like Chèvre and Burrata with highly tannic wines like Cabernet Sauvignon. Avoid pairing spicy meats with high alcohol wines, as this increases the “heat” of the wine. Pungent cheeses paired with spicy or seasoned meats will create a competition in flavors.

**QUICK PAIRINGS**

**BLUE CHEESE**
Pair with honey, figs, fig syrup, mustards. Chutneys and compotes help balance the pungency of the blue cheese.

**SEMI-HARD CHEESE**
Pair with stone fruits such as peaches, apricots and quince.

**GOAT CHEESE**
Pair with honey, dried fruits, chocolates and dates.

**PROSCUITTO**
Pair with melons, figs, pears, peaches, apples, brie, mozzarella, and gorgonzola.

**SALAMI**
Pair with pickled vegetables, goat cheese, cheddar, apricots, and mustard.

**JAMÓN**
Pair with watermelon, onion jam, melons, figs, mozzarella, manchengo, and goat cheese.

**PÂTÉ**
Pair with fruit jam, pickled vegetables, and cranberries.

“It is fun to see how one combination can be an amazing pairing while the same wine with a different cheese can be a total train wreck. The illuminating part is then figuring out why one was successful and the other was not. That really helps expand people’s awareness and palates.”

- Cowgirl Creamery
You’ve worked so hard to make this event special, now it’s time to enjoy the rewards.

Experience the full potential of your wine, cheese, and charcuterie pairings by tasting each element individually, then together. Start with a sip of wine to experience the taste and textures. Next, take of bite of cheese and charcuterie to enjoy the aromas, flavors and textures in their entirety. Finish the tasting with another sip of wine to experience the pairing together.

**TASTING PROGRESSION**

The general rule of thumb is to start with the lighter flavors and work your way up to the more bold, intense flavors.

**SIGHT**

Begin your tasting experience by looking at your wine, cheese and charcuterie. **How does it look?** What colors would you use to describe the items? Does it look appetizing? Is the color right?

**SMELL**

Go ahead, take a whiff! The aromas of wine, cheese and charcuterie should match the flavors. **What does it smell like?** Try to describe the aromas you note. Are they fruity or savory? Complex and hard to describe, or easy to discern the different aromas?

**TASTE AND TEXTURE**

Now the fun part! Take a sip or a bit and pay attention to the texture and mouthfeel. Ask yourself these questions as you progress through the stages. And yes, these are true for wine as much as cheese and charcuterie:

**How does it feel on the tongue?** Smooth, grainy, creamy, velvety.

**How does it taste?** Is it tart or tangy, sharp or mellow, fruity or savory? What notes in the aroma carried through with the flavor?

**EXPERIENCE THE FLAVOR**

Allow yourself to experience the entire flavor curve, from initial taste to finish. Be patient as you may not experience the full flavor until 30 seconds after first taste.

**How does it finish?** Is it long-lasting, like a fine wine? And, above all, is it balanced?
MEET THE CONTRIBUTORS

Ask questions, taste and learn from the experts who know cheese and charcuterie best!

Cowgirl Creamery

Since the early 1990s, Cowgirl Creamery has worked to reflect the bounty of Marin County, and support the viability of local agriculture with their artisan cheese selection. Two decades later, with dozens of awards, two creameries, four retail stores and more than 200 cheeses to choose from, Cowgirl Creamery has become a San Francisco landmark.

www.cowgirlcreamery.com

Fatted Calf

Fatted Calf is a charcuterie and butcher shop from California dedicated to the details that produce incredibly tasty food. Sourcing the right ingredients and creating our meaty goods in small batches ensures proper attention is paid to each step in the process. The extra time we take creates a truly exceptional product you’re sure to enjoy.

www.fattedcalf.com

Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company

Family owned and operated, Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company started as a dairy farm, later expanding into the creamery business. Starting with their signature blue cheese, the brand now makes a variety of cheeses in addition to cheesemaking classes and trade education classes. A special thank you to Jill Giacomini Basch for her insightful expertise on the wonderful and tasty world of cheeses!

www.pointreyescheese.com

The Cheese Board Collective

Worker owned since 1971, The Cheese Board Collective has evolved from a husband and wife shop to a well respected storefront. With almost 400 different cheeses to choose from, both domestic and international, they source from both artisan cheesemakers as well as well-known cheese distributors. A special thank you to Omri Avraham and Chutharat Sae-Tong for sharing their extensive knowledge of cheese with us!

www.cheeseboardcollective.coop

Boccalone

Boccalone is the creation of Chris Cosentino and Mark Pastore, who are known for their authentic Italian cuisine and commitment to sustainability at Incanto restaurant in San Francisco. Boccalone artisan salumi combine high quality pork, Italian sea salt, and the freshest spices with the rarest of all ingredients: time. They start with sustainably-raised, heritage-breed pork, then combine old-world recipes and traditional methods with modern technology to create delicious salumi.

www.boccalone.com

Janet Fletcher

Janet Fletcher is a Napa Valley food writer and the author/co-author of more than 2 dozen books on food and beverage, including Cheese & Wine, Cheese & Beer and The Cheese Course. She is also the publisher of the weekly eNewsletter Planet Cheese sharing their extensive knowledge of cheese with us!

www.janetfletcher.com