

THE FABLED ALCHEMIST

Party Charcuterie *Shopping List*

Buy by the guest, not by the size of the board. For 8, 12 or 20 guests.

Your board 2
How much to buy 3
Checklist by aisle 4
Spend less 5
Build the board 6
Countdown 7
What to pour 8
Quick fixes 9
Table labels 10

SCAN FOR THE FULL GUIDE

Your *board*

Fill these in first, then find your row on page 3.

Party date _____

Guests _____

The board is
circle one

a starter | the party food | the meal

Board goes out at
perishables off 2 hours later _____

The 60-second *plan*

- [ ] Pick your row in the chart
- [ ] Buy 3 cheeses, 2 meats, 2 crackers
- [ ] Spend on one cheese, save on the rest
- [ ] Put out half, keep half cold in the fridge

Notes

How much to *buy*

Low end if a full dinner follows, high end for a long evening.

THE BOARD IS	CHEESE	MEAT	CRACKERS
8 guests			
A starter	16 oz (1 lb)	16 oz (1 lb)	48 to 64
The party food	24 oz (1.5 lb)	24 oz (1.5 lb)	80 to 96
The meal	32 to 48 oz (2 to 3 lb)	16 to 24 oz (1 to 1.5 lb)	80 to 96
12 guests			
A starter	24 oz (1.5 lb)	24 oz (1.5 lb)	72 to 96
The party food	36 oz (2.25 lb)	36 oz (2.25 lb)	120 to 144
The meal	48 to 72 oz (3 to 4.5 lb)	24 to 36 oz (1.5 to 2.25 lb)	120 to 144
20 guests			
A starter	About 44 oz (with 10% extra)	About 44 oz (with 10% extra)	120 to 160
The party food	About 66 oz (with 10% extra)	About 66 oz (with 10% extra)	200 to 240
The meal	80 to 120 oz (5 to 7.5 lb)	40 to 60 oz (2.5 to 3.75 lb)	200 to 240

The rule behind the *chart*

A starter: about **2 oz** cheese and **2 oz** meat per guest, 6 to 8 crackers. The party food: about **3 oz** of each, 10 to 12 crackers. The meal: **4 to 6 oz** cheese and **2 to 3 oz** meat. The 20-guest starter and party-food rows include about 10% extra for a bigger crowd.

Checklist by *aisle*

Look in the cupboard and fridge before you buy.
Write your amount from page 3 in "How much".

GOT IT	AISLE	BUY	HOW MUCH	BUDGET PICK	SPLURGE PICK
☐	**Cheese**	**1 firm**, a third of your cheese		Cheddar or Colby Jack block	Aged cheddar or gouda wedge
☐		**1 soft**, a third		Whipped cream cheese or small brie	Triple cream brie or goat cheese
☐		**1 stronger**, a third		Pepper jack or a small blue	Gorgonzola or aged parmesan
☐	**Meat**	**2 kinds**, half your meat each		Salami, pepperoni, summer sausage	Prosciutto
☐	**Crackers**	**2 crackers**, optional baguette		Store-brand butter crackers	Seeded or herbed cracker
☐	**Fruit**	**1 fresh, 1 dried**		Grapes	Berries or figs
☐	**Crunch**	**1 nut**, one bowl		Bulk-bin almonds	Candied pecans
☐	**Briny**	**1 pickle or olive**, one bowl		Pickles from the fridge	Mixed olives
☐	**Sweet**	**1 jam or honey**, one bowl		Jam you own, or honey	Fig jam
☐	**Serving**	Spreaders (one per soft cheese), a small knife, small plates, napkins, toothpicks			

Fruit, nuts, pickles and spreads have no chart amount: fill each group to fit your board and stop.

Spend on one, save on the *rest*

Three cheeses people recognize beat seven they won't touch.

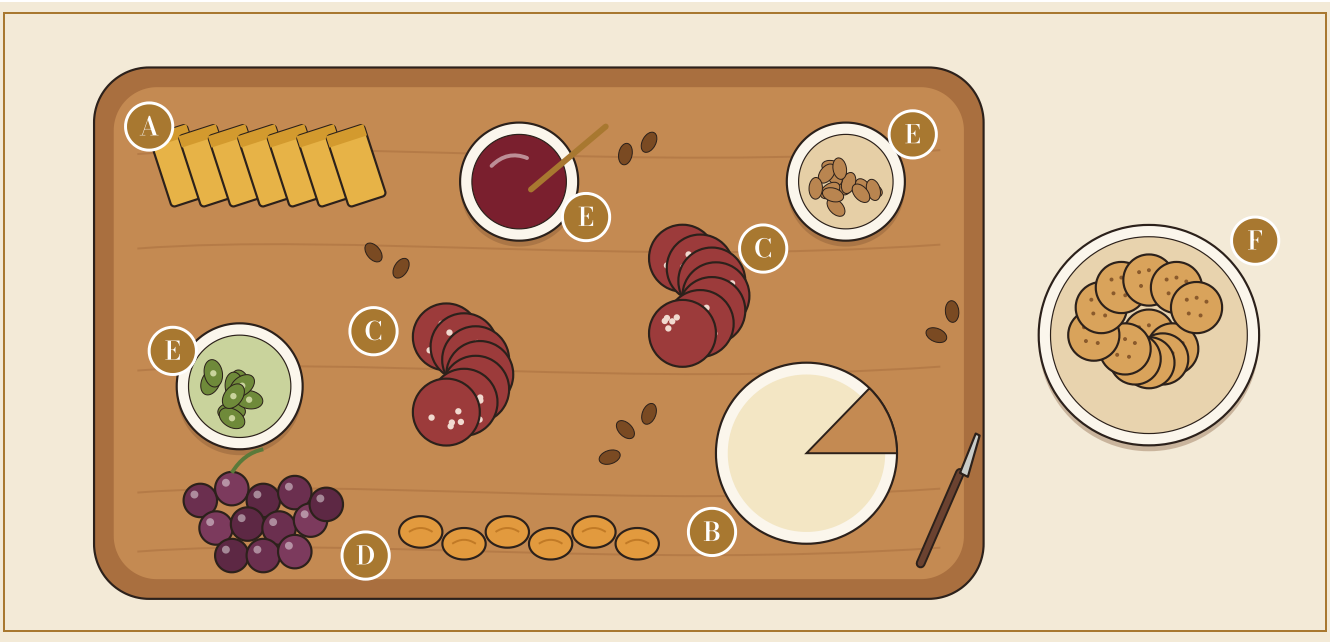
1. Salami, pepperoni or summer sausage instead of prosciutto. Fold or roll the slices so they look generous.
2. Two supermarket blocks plus one standout wedge instead of five specialty cheeses.
3. End cuts of cheese, which many stores sell at a discount.
4. Bulk-bin nuts in small amounts instead of pricey mixes.
5. Jam, honey, pickles or leftover cranberry sauce you already own.
6. A smaller board filled to the edge looks more generous than a big one with gaps.

Waste-proof *it*

Buy crackers last and a little extra: they're the cheapest thing to overbuy. Don't buy a seventh cheese. Hard cheese and cured meat that never left the fridge become sandwiches and omelets. Anything out more than 2 hours goes in the trash.

Build it in six *groups*

Bowls first, then cheese, meat and fruit. Crackers go beside the board.



1. Set the bowls (E) down first.
2. Add the cheeses (A and B), spaced apart.
3. Fold or roll the meat (C) into loose piles.
4. Add fruit (D), then fill gaps with nuts. Crackers (F) go in a bowl beside the board.
5. A spreader for each soft cheese, plus small plates and napkins.
6. Label anything with nuts, pork or dairy. Keep gluten-free crackers apart from wheat ones.

The *countdown*

Shop in two trips: pantry items a week out, cheese, meat and fruit 2 days before.

1 week	☐ Crackers, nuts, jams and drinks; check the pantry first
2 days	☐ Cheese, meat and fruit
Morning of	☐ Cut the cheese, fold the meat, wash the fruit ☐ Pack a half-size backup tray for the fridge
60 min before	☐ Hard cheese out of the fridge
30 min before	☐ Build the board, fill the cracker bowl
1 to 2 hours in	☐ Swap in the cold backup tray

Board out at _____

Perishables off by _____

Keep cold food at **40°F or colder**. Perishables out **2 hours** at room temperature are done.

What to pour *beside it*

Bubbles and acidity cut the richness of cheese. Recipes at thefabledalchemist.com.

ON THE BOARD	POUR	NO-ALCOHOL TWIN
Cheddar, salami, apple	Apple cider old fashioned	Apple ginger fizz
Brie, grapes, crackers	Apple cider mimosa	Cranberry mocktail
Goat cheese, olives, cucumber	Cucumber elderflower spritz	The same spritz, no alcohol
Blue cheese, nuts, dried fruit	Apple cider sangria	Non-alcoholic mulled wine
A cold evening, a crowd	Hot apple cider bar	The same bar, no spirits

Notes

Quick *fixes*

Five problems, five fixes. Keep this page by the board.

PROBLEM	WHAT TO DO
Crackers ran out	Buy more than the chart says and keep them in a bowl, not on the board.
The board looks sparse	Cut cheese into different shapes, group foods together and fill gaps with grapes or nuts. Or use a smaller board.
The cheese tastes flat	It's too cold. Take it out 30 to 60 minutes before serving.
Everyone crowds one corner	For 20 or more, make two boards in two rooms, not one giant one.
Picked over by hour three	Swap in the cold half-size tray.

Photos, pairings and the full guide at **thefabledalchemist.com**

Notes

Table *labels*

Cut on the gray dashes, fold on the solid brass line, and stand each card by its group. Check every package and write in any allergen.

◇ **Firm Cheese** CONTAINS DAIRY, _____	◇ **Soft Cheese** CONTAINS DAIRY, _____	◇ **Stronger Cheese** CONTAINS DAIRY, _____
◇ **Meat** CONTAINS: _____	◇ **Crackers** CONTAINS: _____	◇ **Gluten-Free Crackers** KEEP APART · CONTAINS: ____
◇ **Nuts** CONTAINS NUTS, _____	◇ **Pickles or Olives** CONTAINS: _____	◇ **Jam or Honey** CONTAINS: _____