



# ROUBA SHAHIN

MY JOURNEY WITH FOOD

- GRAZING PLATTER 2-4 people

I am a great believer in food bringing people together and there's nothing that does that task better than a delicious cheese board. All our chats, laughter and good times are often shared around a table and here I will give you a simple step by step visual guide on how to create an impressive grazing board for your best friend. The key here is to simplify and use the little space you have on this smaller board/s to your advantage. These are fun, simple and pretty. Put them together before that special someone arrives and just remember people really do EAT WITH THEIR EYES





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# *Ingredients List*

2 Cheeses

Ricotta

Crostini

Halva

Turkish delight

biscuits

Crackers

Snow Peas Fresh

Pears

Dried Fruit

Figs

Fried Bread

Dates

Dip

## **Garnishes**

Oregano leaves fresh

Herbs

Dried Roses (whole)

## What you need

Two smaller size boards same size or similar in size. Make sure the surface of the boards is food safe

I used long oval boards 56 x15 cm.

A shopping List, Write down a list of all the ingredients so you don't miss buying a thing.

## Preparation is key to anything you do

There's no discrimination, big or small when it come to a cheese board. The same rules apply...

Keep food to one or two bites

You want your food to look artful, delicious and most importantly for your guests just to dig in.

Prepare/Make all your food/ingredients before you begin assembling.





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# What cheese should you use?

Choose two different cheeses approximately 200 grams each. Generally this will be a hard and a soft cheese. This automatically creates different colours, shapes and flavours on your board which is exactly what you want. For this smaller cheese board, keep your cheese presented in a wedge or in a circular block.

Here is a guide when choosing cheese for your cheese board

- Stick to at least one cheese that your guest will be familiar with and this usually is a cheddar.
- Include a soft creamy cheese

I love buying my cheese from specialty cheese shops. I find the staff more familiar with best flavours and textures and more importantly what cheese is ripe and at its peak. You could even taste the cheese before purchasing if you like.



## Different types of cheese for you to consider

### HARD CHEESES

Cheddar  
Colby  
Provolone  
Gouda  
Parmesan  
Manchego

### SOFT CHEESES

Brie  
Goat cheese  
Soft blue cheese  
gorgonzola  
Camembert  
Ricotta



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## Serve the cheese at room temperature

Cheese tastes better at room temperature so I highly suggest you take the cheese out from the fridge at least an hour before serving it to allow it to come to room temperature.



## Decide on a Design

Sometimes less is more. Have a plan in mind for your grazing board before you begin. You are going to keep this board pretty and simple and not fill every part of it. Think cheese first, then condiments, followed by extras to create a visual impact and finally the finishing touches such as herbs and flowers.

## Soft Cheese

To begin with, add your round soft cheese to the side of the board.



## Cheddar

Place the wedge of cheddar on the opposite board. If you are using on bigger board place it on the other side.

An option is to slice your cheddar cheese ahead of time. This is another way to invite your guests to dig in.



## Ricotta hors'deouvres

For something different, consider ricotta hors'deouvres. These are tasty bites of fresh ricotta served on crostini or mini toasts. As far as the topping goes, the sky is your limit, you can drizzle with honey or top with a small piece of avocado. Here I simply used a fresh oregano leaf and cracked black pepper is a must!



## Halva

Add a bit of sweetness to your cheese board. My suggestion here, is a wedge of halva. You're not limited to chocolate. Choose a flavour you or your friends love. You can also substitute halva with quince paste. Try to keep a wedge shape with your alternative choice



## What is Halva

Halva is the Arabic word for 'sweet'. It's a traditional sesame paste dessert popular in the Middle East. In fact the Middle East today offers the biggest variety of halva, from swirled chocolate, slivered almonds to pistachio, the flavours are endless. There are many versions and flavours of halva around the world today, definitely worth exploring.

## Turkish Delight

This is the deconstructed version of my Turkish delight sandwich. Encourage your friends to stretch out a Turkish delight between two biscuits. It's so satisfying. This recipe is also on my website



## Alternatives to Turkish Delight

Sweet suggestions for you to include instead of Turkish Delight:  
Piled up jelly beans, liquorices, yogurt covered pretzels,  
marshmallows, mini brownies, rocky road.

## Crackers

No grazing board is complete without crackers. There are no rules for what crackers to use. Stack the crackers into the suggested space to keep the board looking neat.



## Peas love Cheese

Crunchy is an obvious choice for any grazing board. Here, the snow peas fill up the space beautifully.

They are tender, sweet and crunchy and will add a pretty touch to your board. Not to mention how the juicy crispy pod, balances the creaminess of your soft cheese, making it delicious.



## Pears

Pears are wonderful accompaniments that go well with any cheese. It is best to cut the pear right at the end as it has a tendency to brown. A squeeze of lemon also keeps it from browning instantly.

Great substitutes for pears;

**Apples**

**Fuyu persimmons**

These are sweet and mild with great texture and go well with soft cheese. Not many people have tried them so they will add more interest and create conversation. You will also love beautiful pop of orange colour too.



## Dried Fruit

Dried fruits are colourful, flavourful and an easy accompaniment to your grazing board. The variety you choose is completely up to you. They will add a chewy element to your board.





## Figs

Fresh figs pair well with firm and hard cheese due to their soft texture and sweet flavour. Halve them to create a beautiful colour. Fresh figs are not always easy to get. Here I would substitute with fresh strawberries for their visual appeal. Strawberries are lush, bold, and sweet and are perfect to snack on. Slice them in half lengthways through the stem and leave the greenery on for a fun presentation.



## Fried Bread

Almond bread, Bread crisps, biscotti or rustic flatbreads all add shape and texture to a board. These are all found at most supermarkets today. Choose what you love. Otherwise tear some Arabic flat bread into pieces similar to the size shown on the board. Fry in vegetable oil until lightly golden.

## Dates

Dates are sweet and pair perfectly with soft cheese. You can either pile a few dates on your board or take a few minutes to stuff them and wow your friends. Here's how to stuff your dates:

- Make a small slit lengthways in the date (this will give you a little pocket to stuff)
- Remove the pit
- Stuff dates with coarsely ground pistachio or desiccated coconut.





## Dip

No cheeseboard is complete without a dip. With so many vibrant colours on your board already, a less colourful but exotic dip works well.

### To make Tahini Carob Dip:

½ cup of Tahini (hulled)

1 ½ tablespoons of carob molasses or  
blackstrap molasses

You can either drizzle the molasses over  
the tahini and swirl as much or as little as  
you desire



## Herbs & Rose Petals

Remember this is a simple board so you only need to add a few sprigs of herbs. Garnishing with Edible flowers or dried roses adds a delicate touch to your board. You could easily use fresh flowers instead. Choose delicate fresh flowers that are smaller in size.



## Add or Remove

Always stand back, take a moment to admire your board

**Less is more**

Don't crowd your board with crackers and condiments.

Remember you can always top up as you need



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