Colorful Budget Charcuterie-Style Food Board



A festive, no-cook snack board for an easy New Year's Eve celebration

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Make your celebration feel special without spending a fortune! This colorful snack board combines cheese, creamy dip, fresh fruit, crisp vegetables, crackers, and crunchy bites. It's simple to assemble, looks generous on the table, and gives everyone something they enjoy.

Prep Time: 25 minutes
Cook Time: 0 minutes
Total Time: 25 minutes
Servings: 6–8 people

OVEN TEMPERATURE: 400°F (200°C)

YOU'LL NEED

- **8 ounces cheddar or mild cheese, cut into bite-size cubes**
- **1 cup hummus or whipped cream cheese**
- **1 box whole-wheat or buttery crackers**
- **1 medium apple, thinly sliced**
- **1 cup grapes or orange segments**
- **1 cup baby carrots**
- **1 cup cucumber slices**
- **½ cup olives or pickles**
- **½ cup pretzels or peanuts**
- **2 tablespoons dried cranberries**
- **2 tablespoons honey or pepper jelly**
- **Fresh rosemary or parsley, for garnish**

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

1. **Prepare the ingredients:** Wash and thoroughly dry the fruit and vegetables. Slice the apple and cucumber, and cut the cheese into bite-size cubes. To help prevent apple slices from browning, toss them with a little lemon juice.
2. **Prepare the dip:** Spoon the hummus or whipped cream cheese into a small serving bowl. Place it near the center of a large wooden board or serving platter.
3. **Arrange the cheese and produce:** Place the cheese cubes, apple slices, grapes or orange segments, carrots, and cucumber around the dip in separate sections.
4. **Add the savory bites:** Arrange the olives or pickles and pretzels or peanuts in small clusters. Keep similar ingredients together to create a neat, colorful look.
5. **Fill the gaps:** Tuck crackers around the board and sprinkle dried cranberries into any empty spaces. Add fresh rosemary or parsley for a festive finishing touch.
6. **Serve:** Place the honey or pepper jelly in a small bowl beside the cheese. Serve immediately, or keep the board chilled until guests arrive.

Helpful Tips

- Make it look abundant: Use small bowls for dips and olives, and arrange ingredients in close clusters instead of spreading them too thinly.
- Keep it affordable: Choose one or two cheeses, seasonal fruit, and store-brand crackers. You don't need expensive specialty ingredients.
- Add variety: Popcorn, toasted bread, roasted chickpeas, or seasonal fruit are inexpensive additions.
- Make it nut-free: Replace peanuts with pretzels, roasted chickpeas, or extra crackers. Check package labels for possible cross-contact if serving someone with a nut allergy.
- Create a festive look: Use a few sprigs of rosemary, orange slices, or red grapes to add New Year's Eve color.

Make-Ahead Instructions

You can wash, slice, and portion most ingredients up to four hours ahead. Store the prepared fruit, vegetables, and cheese in separate covered containers in the refrigerator.
Assemble the board shortly before serving. Add crackers and pretzels at the last minute so they stay crisp.

Storage

Refrigerate leftover cheese, hummus, fruit, and vegetables promptly in separate airtight containers. For food safety, don't leave perishable ingredients at room temperature for more than two hours (or one hour if the temperature is above 90°F). Discard anything that has been left out longer.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I prepare this food board ahead of time?

Yes! Prepare and refrigerate the ingredients up to four hours in advance. Assemble the board closer to serving time and add crackers just before guests arrive.

2. Can I make this board without nuts?

Absolutely. Replace peanuts with pretzels, roasted chickpeas, or extra crackers. Check ingredient labels if you're serving guests with allergies.

3. How can I make this board serve more people?

Add inexpensive options such as popcorn, toasted bread, extra crackers, seasonal fruit, or another bowl of hummus. These additions make the board more filling without requiring a large budget.

4. What can I use instead of cheddar?

Monterey Jack, Colby, mozzarella cubes, or another mild cheese all work well. Choose a cheese that is easy to cut and share.

5. What if I don't have a wooden charcuterie board?

No problem! A large serving platter, baking sheet lined with parchment paper, or clean cutting board works just as well.

A little color, a few simple ingredients, and a table full of people you love—that's a lovely way to welcome the New Year!