

# The Art of the Antipasti Tray



What's antipasti?

It's an appetizer consisting of an assortment of foods, such as smoked meats, cheese, fish, and vegetables.

*Sounds like a low-carb platter of perfection, doesn't it?*

I love to build antipasti platters for small gatherings. They're simple, beautiful, delicious, and often do not require any cooking.

They're also the perfect item to bring to a party.

What's great about them is there's no perfect combination of ingredients. You decide what goes on it. And you can add whatever you'd like.

Here are some basic but tasty ideas of what you can include in an antipasti tray:

- Smoked or cured meats or specialty items venison or boar salami
- Little mozzarella cheese balls marinated in olive oil, red pepper, and Italian herbs
- Roasted or grilled eggplant (or a low carb spread

like baba ghanoush)

- Strawberries ( you can sprinkle them with some really good balsamic vinegar for extra oomph)
- Roasted peppers
- Fancy Olives
- Tuna seared with black pepper served sashimi style
- Bacon-wrapped scallops or shrimp
- Raw veggies with any sort of dipping or drizzling sauce
- Grissini breadsticks or raw veggies for crunch
- Zola nuts – YUM

All you need is a pretty platter.

Then, pile on the goodies!

Below is my formula for Antipasti – Zola style.

Use these tips for inspiration when you're picking antipasti items for your party platter.



**Meats:** One traditional choice is prosciutto (a version of Italian ham). You can find this in the deli meat section. Salami is popular, too. There are tons of salami options. You can choose other meats, too. The one thing I ask is that you go to the deli section where humans wait on you. Ask them for the meat selections they either roast in-house or are roasted nearby and made with no preservatives. It's better for you, and it tastes better. It's usually pretty easy to tell by looking in the case. Sometimes they will even have signage that says "roasted in house." Choose those meats. Stay out of the section of the store where the sliced meats are in shrink-wrapped heavy plastic. That's a sure bet they are filled with preservatives.



**Fish:** If you like smoked trout or salmon you can have those on your antipasti tray. You can cook scallops and have a dish of those with toothpick nearby. Or you can even put pickled herring on your tray. Just make sure what you are buying is fresh.



**Cheese:** You can go crazy with the cheese. Your platter might have a theme with Italian cheese, French cheese, or even American. You can also do an assortment. If you have a lactose sensitivity, you can use cheese made from sheep's milk. Chevre (goat cheese) is a nice option as well. They even have vegan cheeses now that are quite yummy.

If I'm making an antipasti platter for a party I'll cube the cheese so folks can pick up cubes with a little pair of tongs. If I'm having a few friends over for dinner, I might just put 1-2 large cheeses on my platter and let people cut off chunks. You decide.



**Vegetables:** You have three choices here. You can choose your favorite vegetables and serve them raw. Or you can make antipasti veggies. For instance, I marinate my own mushrooms. I just get mushrooms, clean them, and then put oil, vinegar, and spices in the bowl and let them sit in the refrigerator until party time. They get better with a few hours of marinating. You can get as involved in this as you want. We have recipes on the site for various veggies. You can also go the easy route and head to the deli section that has an olive bar. Most grocery stores have them now. There you'll find marinated artichoke hearts, marinated peppers, olives, and more. They have these little teeny red peppers at my deli that are stuffed with a sweetish cheese. These things taste like dessert to me. Love them. Look for the little marinated onions. Go wild.

**Fruit:** I often put berries in little bowls (that way they're not touching the meats and cheeses just in case someone's a strict vegetarian or vegan). I'll also use big strawberries with the green heads still on them to distribute color. Or cherries with

the stems. Or grapes on the vine (if you're using grapes, don't go overboard – they are very sweet).

**Condiments:** You can have little ramekins of things like mustards or even exotic chutneys. Be careful that you don't eat much chutney, it's very sweet! I've even done little pots of pate (or slices of it).

**Bread:** I stay away from the baguettes and large slices of bread but I do toss on a few Melba rounds. People not on the diet love them and those of us who have done a ZReduction just wink at each other. You can also do a little crock of cheese spread (make your own or get a good one) and you can stick grissini breadsticks in it. Cut them in half and stick them in too if you want. Looks like a porcupine that way ☐

**Display:** The art of presenting your antipasti platter is what makes it special. You can go wild with this or very simple. Don't get worked up about it. I have two options for trays. One is to use a large platter. The size of a turkey platter is a good gauge. Then I put small dishes of the liquid items on there so the juices don't mingle.

Another option is to use a large cutting board. This works well because when folks cut off pieces of cheese, they are cutting on a board. This looks very country-French or country-Italian.

How you display the items can be simple or fancy. Traditionally the prosciutto is rolled into little cigar shapes. You can roll cheese slices too, in some cases. Here are some more examples of antipasti trays for your inspiration:



Eat like this, and you'll be able to maintain your weight through the holidays and beyond.

Have questions?

Call us at 800-255-9853 and speak with a coach.

We're here to help you navigate the holidays successfully.

Cheers,