



# The Art of the Antipasti Tray

The definition of Antipasti: *An appetizer usually 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?

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

Smoked meats – visit a smokehouse to get cool options like venison or boar

Marinate broccocini (small balls of Mozzarella cheese) in olive oil, red pepper and Italian herbs

Roasted or grilled eggplant either marinated or turned into baba ganoush

Strawberries sprinkled with some really good balsamic

Roasted peppers with roasted garlic

Tuna seared with black pepper served sashimi style

Bacon wrapped scallops or shrimp

Roasted veggies chunked with any sort of dipping or drizzling sauce

I love to build antipasti platters for parties. It makes a perfect appetizer course or just something to munch on while watching a big sporting event. There's no perfect combination. My plan here is to give you some options for how you might go about 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. 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 usually pretty easy to tell by looking in the case. 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 or you can even put pickled herring on your tray. Just make sure what you are buying is fresh.

**Cheeses:** You can go crazy with the cheeses. Your platter might have a theme with Italian cheeses, French cheeses or even American. You can also do an assortment. Just put large blocks of cheese on the platter and let people cut off hunks, or cube the cheese so they can pick up cubes with a little tong.

**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 til party time. They get better with a few hours of marinating. You can get as involved in this as you want. You can also go the

easy route and head to the olive bar in the grocery store. 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. I also use big strawberries with the green heads still on them for color.

**Condiments:** You can have little ramekins of mustard or even a chutney. I've even done little pots of pate.

**Breads:** I stay away from the baguettes or slices of bread but I do toss on a few Melba rounds. People not on the [Plan Z 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 breadsticks in it. Cut them in half and stick them in, too if you want. Looks like a porcupine that way.

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