

ONE BITE

VEGAN MAGAZINE

*Party time!
Vegan grazing
tables*

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Almond ricotta

Vegan jerky



Create your own vegan grazing table

Are you aware of the latest craze to sweep Pinterest? Grazing tables are a hot topic in the catering world these days and while the conventional set ups may include things like smoked and cured meats, cheeses and pâtés, it's just as easy to construct a vegan version your guests will love!

So whether you're interested in doing a small scale platter for an aperitif or a full table for a party, the recipes and how-tos from our bunch of ridiculously talented vegan food blogging contributors will arm you with the confidence to make your own.

How to create a Vegan Grazing Platter

By Nicole Berth

There is something so comforting about relaxing at home with friends chatting over food and drinks for hours and it is one of my favorite things to do in the world. So I thought it would be time to share some of my favorite ideas on how to create a vegan grazing platter or as some call it, a crudité platter. Crudités are traditional French appetizers consisting of sliced or whole raw vegetables which are typically dipped in vinaigrette or other sauces. Following my step-by-step guide will help you to create a colourful, seasonal vegan grazing platter.



1. Plan your Platter

Think about what theme you would like to follow. This will make putting things together much easier. I am totally just throwing some ideas at you here and you can decide if it's useful to you or not. You might want to go for a rainbow sharing platter, so make sure you choose foods from every color. Or you might want to go for a harvest platter displaying all autumn harvest fruits/veggies featuring pumpkin, potatoes, and carrots. You might want to go international and create a Mediterranean platter featuring different hummus versions and turkish bread or maybe even an Indian inspired platter with coconut chutneys accompanied by naan bread. Maybe you want to go for a Christmas platter featuring warm flavors of cinnamon and clove?

2. Start with the Base

The bigger in size, the more it will impress. Round and longish shapes will work best; it depends a bit on your table shape. If you have a long table you will want a longish board so everyone is in good reach of the food. I love natural wooden or marble boards which are easier to clean afterwards. If you do not have a big enough board consider using an old baking tray. You could also use a tray or a pizza stone. Alternatively, a large cake platter might work nicely too.

3. The Selection of Crudites/Foods

Always go for a colorful mixture of organic foods. What I mean by that is the more food colour shades you add the more beautiful it will look. Also go for wholesome natural foods and avoid highly processed foods. Try to keep a good balance of light veg and fruit but also good carbs as a tummy-filler. To the mixture of vegetable and fruit I add nuts, dips and spreads.

So let's break the foods down for a second:

Veg: use firm and crisps veggies like carrots,

celery, olives, dried tomatoes, radish, Treviso radicchio, asparagus, tomatoes, steamed broccoli and cauliflower chunks, sugar snaps, baby corn, green beans, capsicum.

Fruit: go for fruit that doesn't go brown quickly and remains fresh for some hours. Grapes in all variations are perfect, strawberries, figs, cherries, and blackberries work well too.

Dips and spreads: hummus, [vegan cheese](#), olive tapenade, peanut sauce, guacamole, miso cream cheese (1 cup coconut yogurt, black sesame seeds toasted, 1 tbsp. miso paste, salt) are all perfect dipping sauces.

Tummy-fillers: whole meal bread, crisp bread, [glutenfree seed bread](#), pita bread chips, chapatti, naan, pretzels, popcorn, baked or steamed sweet potato slices, marinated tofu

Nuts & seeds: fill up those empty spaces on your grazing platter with little bowls of almonds, cashews or pumpkin seeds.

4. Preparation of Food

Think about how to cut your veggies and fruits to keep it interesting on the eye. Don't be afraid to cut carrots lengthwise or use a crinkle cutter. If you want to go super creative use a cookie cutter to cut for example cucumber slices in cute shapes. When using small veggies, consider creating little skewers to make eating a bit easier.

5. Arrangement of the sharing platter

This very much depends on the kind of theme you want to go with but try to keep it interesting by keeping it colorful and make sure foods are mixed up well so everyone can reach every condiment easily. I would always suggest to start with the biggest foods and gather the small ones around. Also if you have bowls with dips, it pays to arrange them first as you won't be able to shift them around once you have placed all the veggies/fruit.

6. Planning beyond your sharing platter

Don't forget to serve some refreshing drinks with your Vegan Grazing Platter: go for light lemonades, flavoured waters or light wines. Also consider sustainable napkin options like recyclable or even better cloth napkins. Place little tasting plates and forks on the table in case

your guests want to help themselves with their own plates. Also add little spread knives and spoons to your dips and spreads.

I really hope you enjoyed this little tutorial!



About the author...

Nic is the creative head and photographer behind [When Sweet Becomes Healthy](#). Moving from Germany to New Zealand at 25, she was introduced to a whole new world of eating. Having suffered with digestive issues from childhood, the new Kiwi lifestyle gave her an understanding of the effects of what you eat on the body. Fast forward to a few years later and Nic now follows a 99% plant-based diet, has returned home to Germany and is living life with abundant energy. A lover of all things sweet, Nic has made it her mission with *WSBH* to show that you do not have to sacrifice taste when having healthy desserts.



Create 4 vegan cheeses overnight with minimal effort

By Nicole Berth

Cheese seems to be one of the massive hold-backs for a lot of people when adapting to a plant based diet. And of course how couldn't it be difficult if you have been eating cheese all your life and now you are suddenly supposed to stop? So it felt almost natural to me to write a post about how to create 4 vegan cheeses overnight with minimal effort to help all of you cheese loving people out there! And believe me cheese was something that I didn't let go off for a while.

So what are the options if you want to give up cheese?

1. Going for vegan supermarket cheese:

The thing with vegan supermarket cheeses is the same with dairy cheeses: it's filled with additives and preservatives often oil-based or starches – things I don't want my body to absorb in any shape or form. In no way do they add any nutritional value to your diet.

2. Not having cheese at all (Is that even an option?):

I know how crazy this sounds but after being on a plant-based diet for more than 3 years I am not really craving cheese anymore, at least not as much as in the beginning of my vegan journey. There are so many amazing vegan spreads or other dishes that don't really leave room for any desperate cheese cravings. But I hear you, cheesy friends, not having cheese is not an option for some of you. And understandably this blog post is for you lovely people out there.

3. Making your own vegan cheese:

Vegan cheese recipes can be pretty complex. I love all sorts of DIY recipes but starting to experiment with a cheese recipe really took a while. I guess that's because I wanted my

cheeses to be easy with no fuss ingredients and equipment. And I wanted to be able to create 4 different ones from 2 basic recipes. Now, believe me when I say this, the cheeses I am going to show you today are off-the-hook amazing, especially the soft ones.

By the way, what do you think about my claim of creating cheeses overnight? To be honest, I was even more ambitious in the beginning as my initial idea was to create 4 cheeses in under an hour. Friends, it didn't happen in under an hour, I am sorry. You could manage with 2 people I guess but you just need a bit of time to let the cheese set. I will tell you though that these cheeses require minimal effort and by letting them set overnight you don't have spend time waiting for the cheese to set in the fridge.

With my 2 basic cheese recipes you will be able to create a selection of 4 cheeses which will allow you to put together a reasonable cheese board. Two cheeses are sliceable featuring a pink pepper and a herb cheese. They are perfect for sandwiches, caprese salad, oven bakes or your antipasti platter. The other 2 are soft cheeses – one featuring flavors of chopped walnuts and figs, the other being an olive, dried tomato and dill cheese. They are great for sandwiches, to dip with veggies but also for pasta or baked potatoes.

The salami pictured above is a smoked fig salami from Greece. It is absolutely amazing with the vegan cheese, adding sweet and smoked flavors. No kidding, this is the bomb for vegan cheeses platters. I get mine from the lovely people of the [Wholefood Box](#).

Almond pink pepper gouda (makes 2 cheeses with a 10 cm diameter)

- 5 tbsp agar agar powder
- 5 cups water
- 1 cup almond flour
- 4 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1/8 cup nutritional yeast
- 1 tsp smoky salt
- 1.5 tsp garlic powder (or 1 fresh garlic pod)
- 1/4 tsp turmeric (optional)
- 2 tsp pink pepper corns slightly cracked

In a bowl whisk together the almond flour, lemon juice, olive oil, nutritional yeast, salt, garlic, turmeric, apple cider vinegar and set aside. In a pan whisk together the agar agar powder and water. Bring to a boil for at least five minutes. Add the ingredients of your bowl into the pan while stirring constantly, this should become quite thick quickly. Let cool for at least 15 minutes then stir in the pink peppercorns. Don't boil them as they will lose taste and texture. Pour into your heatproof moulds (I have used a lined ramekin), place in the fridge overnight to set.

Almond pesto gouda (makes 2 cheeses with a 10 cm diameter)

- 5 tbsp agar agar powder
- 5 cups water

- 1 cup almond flour
- 4 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1/8 cup nutritional yeast
- 1 tsp smoky salt
- 1.5 tsp garlic powder (or 1 fresh garlic pod)
- 1/4 tsp turmeric (optional)
- 2 tsp seaweed pesto powder or any dried herbs mix

In a bowl whisk together the almond flour, lemon juice, olive oil, nutritional yeast, salt, garlic, turmeric, apple cider vinegar and set aside. In a pan whisk together the agar agar powder and water. Bring to a boil for at least five minutes. Add the ingredients of your bowl into the pan while stirring constantly, this should become quite thick quickly. Let cool for at least 15 minutes then stir in the pesto powder or dried herbs. Pour into your heatproof moulds (I have used a lined ramekin), place in the fridge overnight to set.

Mediterranean macadamia olive soft cheese (makes 1 soft cheese with 10cm diameter)

- 100g cashews
- 50g macadamias
- 4 tbsp lemon juice
- 4 tsp nutritional yeast
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 3 tsp pineapple juice

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- 1 tsp garlic powder (or 1 fresh clove)
- 1 tsp smoky salt
- 1 handful dried olives +1 tbs rosemary
- Rolled in a handful of chopped dried tomatoes and dried pesto mix

Pre-soak the cashews for at least an hour in warm water before you start. Add all ingredients into your high speed blender or food processor. Once creamy remove from the blender and fold in the dried olives and rosemary. Line a ramekin with parchment paper and fill in the cheese. Let it set in the fridge overnight. The next day grab a board and sprinkle with a mix of dried chopped tomatoes and dried herbs. This way when removing the cheese you turn the ramekin upside down into the herbs. Now carefully roll the cheese into the herbs and tomatoes and try to fully cover it. It is a bit like coating an iced cake with sprinkles. A palette knife can help here as well to transfer the cheese on to the cheeseboard for example.

Walnut fig soft cheese (makes 1 soft cheese with 10cm diameter)

- 100g cashews
- 50g macadamias
- 4 tbs lemon juice

- 4 tsp nutritional yeast
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 tsp smoky salt
- 1 tsp garlic powder (or 1 fresh clove)
- 1 handful chopped walnuts
- 1 handful dried chopped figs
- 3 tsp pineapple juice
- 1 tsp maple syrup
- Rolled in a handful chopped walnuts

Pre-soak the cashews for at least an hour in warm water before you start. Add all ingredients into your high speed blender or food processor. Once creamy remove from the blender and fold in the walnuts and chopped figs. Line a ramekin with parchment paper and fill in the cheese. Let it set in the fridge overnight. The next day grab a board and sprinkle with a mix of dried chopped tomatoes and dried herbs. This way when removing the cheese you turn the ramekin upside down into the herbs. Now carefully roll the cheese into the chopped walnuts and try to fully cover it. It is a bit like coating an iced cake with sprinkles. A palette knife can help here as well to transfer the cheese on to the cheeseboard for example.



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