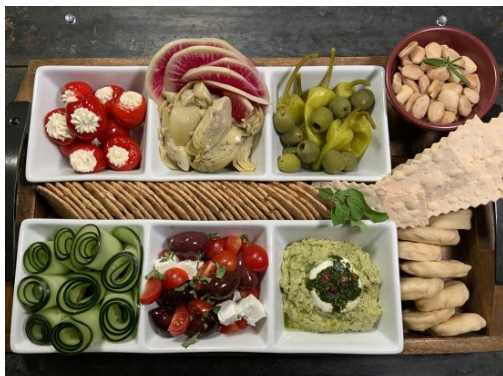




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Super healthy Mediterranean charcuterie board just in time for the Super Bowl

By Susie Iventosch



Mediterranean Appetizer Board Photo Susie Iventosch

Charcuterie boards are all the rage lately, and with good reason. They are beautiful, festive and delicious, with an assortment to please anyone's palate! I recently saw a board that was the size of a six-foot-long banquet table. That one was amazing and so inspirational. I decided to do a vegetarian board made from all of the sun-kissed flavors of the Mediterranean that could be lots of fun anytime, but with Super Bowl LVI coming up, there will be plenty of need for finger foods. We made the same naan that we recently featured, but made them into bite-sized rounds for dipping into hummus and creamy whipped feta, (which is not featured, because my board ran out of space). But, it is perfect for dipping the fresh cucumber roll ups into. If you get really ambitious, you can roll the cucumber around longer slices of red and yellow bell peppers, or salmon with cream cheese, or really anything that sounds tasty to you.

We stuffed the sweet cherry peppers with Boursin Garlic and Fine Herbs cheese. To do this, we just piped

the cheese into the pepper using a pastry bag, fitted with an open star decorating tip. This makes the job really easy and the finish looks professional. Be sure to let the cheese come to room temperature before you pipe it into the pepper.

We found a little trick to fit in more of the cucumber roll ups and that is to use a wine cork to hold them in place until it is filled up so they don't unravel. I kept putting them in and they kept unraveling, until I got wise to the old cork trick! If you roll them up around a creamy cheese you won't have this problem anyway.

The ingredients we featured in our board are listed below. The hummus, chimichurri, and whipped feta recipes are below. I am sure you will think of other items you'd like to include in your board, and especially depending on how big you want to make it. This one is a fairly small board, so I was a bit limited on space.

BOARD INGREDIENTS

- Sweet & Spicy Sweet Piquante Peppers or pickled sweet cherry peppers, stuffed with Boursin cheese
- Whole pepperoncini
- Olive varieties: Castelvetrano, Kalamata, Chalkadiki, Greek Mt. Athos
- Cubed Feta Cheese
- Chopped cherry Tomatoes
- Snipped Basil
- Marinated artichoke hearts
- Watermelon radishes, thinly sliced
- Guara or Marcona salted almonds
- Cucumber roll ups (thinly sliced on the mandoline slicer and rolled up tightly.)
- Cilantro-jalapeno hummus (recipe below)
- Chimichurri (recipe below)
- Whipped Feta (recipe below)
- Crackers
- Mini naan

Cilantro-Jalapeno Hummus (Makes about 1 1/2 cups)

INGREDIENTS

- 1-2 jalapenos diced (depending upon your heat meter!)
- 1 cup cilantro leaves, loosely packed
- 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 15.5-oz. can garbanzo beans?(they come packed 14, 15, 15.5 or 16 oz. depending upon the manufacturers, and any of these are fine)

- 1 tablespoon garbanzo bean brine or ice cold water
- 2 tablespoon tahini
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

Drain garbanzo beans, but reserve the packing brine to use in the hummus. Set aside about 15 garbanzo beans for garnish.

Remove stem, ribs and seeds from the jalapenos, and coarsely dice. Place diced jalapenos in the bowl of your food processor. Process until finely chopped.?

Add cilantro leaves and process until smooth. Mince garlic into this mixture and continue to process.

Add garbanzo beans along with 1 tablespoon of the brine (or ice-cold water) and purée until smooth.?

Add 2 tablespoons tahini, lime juice, olive oil, and salt and puree until smooth. If the hummus is too thick, add a little more of the brine, (or cold water), 1 tablespoon at a time until desired consistency. We found that 1 tablespoon was perfect, but each can of garbanzo beans can vary in both size and moisture content.

To serve, garnish with fried garbanzo beans or chimichurri, (recipe just below), thinly sliced jalapeno, lime wedges, a sprig of cilantro and drizzle extra olive oil over the top.

Fried Garbanzo Beans for Garnish

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a skillet. Add garbanzo beans and sauté over medium heat until crispy. Season with a dash of sea salt.

Chimichurri

(Makes 1/2 cup)

INGREDIENTS

2 jalapenos or Fresno chilis, stems, veins and seeds removed and coarsely chopped

1/2 bunch cilantro leaves (or about 1 1/2 cups loosely packed)

1/2 bunch Italian parsley (or about 1 1/2 cups loosely packed)

2 tablespoons fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried oregano

2 cloves garlic

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon pepper

1/4 cup olive oil

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

DIRECTIONS

Put peppers, garlic, cilantro, parsley and oregano in the food processor and pulse until it reaches the texture you like. Some like it quite chunky and others like it puréed smooth. Either way, once it's chopped, transfer the veggies and herbs to a bowl and add the remaining ingredients. Use right away or store in an airtight container in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Whipped Feta

(Makes about 1 cup)

1/2 cup feta crumbled

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

1/2 cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt

Place feta and olive oil in the bowl of your food processor and process until the feta cheese is smooth. Add lemon juice and yogurt and continue to process just until integrated and light and fluffy. Chill until ready to serve.



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