



*I enjoy putting together platters. Most of the time, I use Italian ingredients because they hold up so well and offer a variety of colors, shapes and textures. I also find that meat and cheese tend to be more popular than veggies. Be creative with your ingredients!*

### **Party Platter #3**

Our neighbors host “Soup Night” in the fall to thank those who pitch in for landscaping costs for our common areas. They provide two big kettles of steaming hot soup, and everyone else pitches in appetizers or desserts. Last time, I brought Party Platter #3. It was a hit!

#### **Ingredients**

2 shapes / textures of crackers

Genoa salami

Soppressata

Mortadella

Chunks of Parmigiano Reggiano

Crumbles of Gorgonzola

Bocconcini (small mozzarella balls)

Large green olives

Kalamata olives

Artichoke hearts quartered

Dijon mustard

Toothpicks

Small bowl for used toothpicks

Purchase ingredients based on the number of friends you plan to serve. The platter in the photo was designed for 10 to 12 people to enjoy a bite, keeping in mind that others were bringing treats too. Be sure to fill your serving platter. Don't leave blank space!

For the crackers, choose two varieties – different shapes and different textures. In the photo, the round crackers are flaky like a butter cracker, and the star shaped crackers are very crunchy, almost like a nut. By using two distinctly different crackers, your platter gains eye appeal and multiple levels of crisp.

The three choices of meat are cut into rounds (salami and soppressata) and triangles (mortadella). Ask the deli person to cut the mortadella ¼ inch thick. It's a fairly mild cold cut and can handle the thickness. Use a biscuit cutter to cut rounds of the mortadella, and then a knife to cut into quarters to get 4 equal sized triangles. Buy the salami and soppressata in logs and cut the rounds one-eighth inch thick. If you ask the deli person to cut the rounds, specify that you don't want them paper thin. You want bites that will hold up as finger food.

The rest of the platter is assembly. I use jarred or canned artichoke hearts, in water, but marinated is fine. Buy the best quality cheese that is available. Simply break the parmigiano reggiano into chunks, and crumble the gorgonzola. The mustard is for dunking the meats. The mozzarella balls and olives are “as is” from the jar or deli counter.

Provide toothpicks for your fellow party-goers and a small bowl for used picks. Break two in advance and put the pieces in the small bowl so that everyone knows that's where they can “throw away” the used toothpicks. Let's keep it fun and tidy!

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