



Joe and I brought Party Platter #2 to a pizza night that our friends hosted. The veggies and Italian cold cuts went well with the pizza. Salad on a Stick added a cool fresh element, and the parmesan fricos were light and crunchy.

Party Platter #2

The introduction says it all. It doesn't get much better than fun times with food with friends.

Ingredients

Broccoli florets, blanched

Red and yellow bell peppers, cut into strips

Mortadella, ¼ inch thick, cut into half moons

Celery, cut into strips

Carrots, cut into strips

Salami rounds, sliced thinly

Plain crackers

Greek and Italian Salad on a Stick

Lemon vinaigrette

Dip (cheddar bacon, ranch, or your favorite)

Fricos, (Parmigiano Reggiano) served separately – recipe follows

To blanch the broccoli, wash it, cut it into florets, and put it in a pot of simmering salted water for 90 seconds. Take the broccoli out of the pot and put it into a bowl of iced water to stop the cooking process. Blanching is not entirely necessary, but it takes the raw edge off of the broccoli and gives it a vibrant green color.

Cut the peppers, celery, and carrots into equally sized strips. Think of them as dippers, so not too big, not too small.

For the mortadella (an Italian bologna), ask your deli person to cut slices that are ¼ inch thick. Then, at home, use a 1 ½ or 2 inch biscuit cutter to cut out rounds, and then cut the rounds in half to make half moons. Obviously this step isn't necessary, but it gives shape diversity to the foods presented.

See my Salad on a Stick page for the salad and lemon vinaigrette recipes. Put the vinaigrette in a small jar that can be highlighted on the platter, shaken and served to everyone's preference. It's fun.

Use your favorite veggie dip, either homemade or store-bought.

I like gluten free Glutino crackers because Joe can eat them.

Fricos are baked wafers made of shredded Parmigiano Reggiano cheese. Here's how you make them. Preheat your oven to 375 F.

Coarsely shred the cheese and drop it into equally sized mounds on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. I use 2 Tablespoons as a measurement, but you can make them bigger or smaller, and the overall amount of cheese you need depends on how many fricos you want to make.

Keep in mind that the cheese will melt and spread, so leave room between mounds, like you would if making cookies. Flatten the mound slightly, and bake for about 10 minutes, until thin and golden brown.

Out of the oven, let the fricos sit for 2-3 minutes, and then cool them on a baking rack. Be gentle! They break easily.

Note that some people will add a small amount of flour and seasonings (pepper, thyme, etc.) to their fricos before baking, but I use only the shredded cheese. Each wafer is like a snowflake – no two look exactly the same. These snacks are addictive, so make plenty! Perhaps start with 2 cups of shredded cheese, and please don't skimp on cheese quality. This is one time when you want the very best ingredient.

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