

Simply Summer Entertaining by Chyka Keebaugh

Styling a grazing plate

A grazing plate is an excellent addition to any event. Creating a few and layering them on your tables as the guests mingle, what could be better? Anything pre-prepared is perfect at this time of year when we are all so busy and need the easy option. But the perfect grazing plate requires a few essential items...

- Good crackers in all shapes, varieties, and sizes. Not only for the taste but for the fact that they look great styled on a plate, in a glass, or on a platter.
- Fresh herbs, to add extra flavor and give a touch of color and movement to your plate.
- You also need the perfect board. Having a variety of sizes, wooden finishes and shapes can make a plate. Keep it rustic and thrown together, a little pile here and a little pile there full of delicious snacks make it so very inviting.



Tips for summer entertaining

You don't have to do everything! Don't over complicate your set up or menu. There is nothing wrong with not cooking everything! I think sometimes we think everything has to be made from scratch, but we don't always have the time for that. I love finding new produce, new flavors and new looks that can bring my plates to life.

- Get organised, plan your menu and don't go overboard. Keep it simple, tonal and fresh.
- Think about how you would like to style it, what colors will work into your theme. What do you have a lot of at home that you can utilise? A collection of white platters? A collection of rustic wooden boards? A mix up of vintage plates? Go with your strengths to make styling easier.
- Outdoor entertaining is one of the best things about summer, so drag your furniture out – style up a shady corner and wow your guests.



Easy ways to incorporate dips into menu

Dips aren't just for dipping. Sure there is nothing better than sitting down with wine and a platter of cheese and dips but have you thought about using dips in your everyday cooking? Think Mediterranean dips dolloped atop of salads, homemade souvlakis drizzled in tzatziki...

- Don't be afraid to skip the dressings and incorporate dips into your salads; a textural dressing will lift a basic salad.
- Create an antipasto prosciutto salad for an entree with tzatziki dressing. It's delicious, summery and fresh.
- Add some extra kick to a simple pasta by stirring dip through it then garnish with some fresh cherry tomatoes and basil.



Guest post by [Chyka Keebaugh](#)