

LS SUGGESTS

In cheese we trust!

The block of dairy goodness known as cheese is a delight in every way for the foodie. Sliced, shredded, melted or just nibbled on its own; there is no end to the possible combinations of enjoying cheese. However, there comes a time when you just need to take the guesswork out of the equation for a no-fail, well-rounded dish of cheesy comfort. And at times, it's easier to go with the flow of tastes, smells, and textures.

CHEESE PLATTERS FOR ALL

One of the easiest ways to enjoy a variety of cheese with an equal variety of accompaniments is the cheese platter. However, the best platters take textures and flavours into account to create a unique experience. Nuts, savoury crackers, seasonal fresh fruits and berries (or their dried versions) are all easy pickings, but it's the cheese that matters the most. Locally made Dhaka poneer can easily be given a place on the cheese board, right alongside imported Swiss cheese and gouda. Grilled vegetables, grapes, apple slices are fail-safe pairings for any cheese — from strong flavourful Camembert to crumbly feta.

TEXTURE MEETS TASTE

It may seem like the best choice based on intuition that hard cheese pairs well with soft accompaniments like pesto, chutney or jams, and soft cheese is complemented by crunchy things like nuts, crackers and grilled vegetables and the likes. At the



same time, acidic elements like tomatoes, lemons, and olives can balance out the overpowering smells of cheeses like Camembert.

It may come as a surprise, but hard cheeses go equally well with hard textures that crunch, such as a nut brittle or caramel toasted corn. At the same time, soft textures like fruit purees and pesto can also complement soft cheese variants.

BEYOND BREAD, CRACKERS AND NUTS Chocolate, often aptly termed the food of the Gods, also happens to be a winning combination with cheese. Of course, not all

chocolates will go with all type of cheese.

Firm cheese, mainly hailing from the Gruyère family are best accompanied by dark chocolate, preferably with cacao content of 70 percent and above. For an added crunch, a handful of cashews is a definite win! If you happen to get your hand on blue cheese, dark chocolate with orange is just the right pick. As for cheese



like Parmesan, mozzarella, manchego, American cheddar, they can all benefit from a hazelnut infused dark chocolate — either as solid chocolate or poured



over the cheese in its melted form. Even available chocolate hazelnut spreads can work out well.

THE RULE OF NO RULES

The true beauty of enjoying cheese lies in its ability to not being bound to any particular 'rule' of pairing and consuming. There are tons of accompaniment suggestions that contradict each other and it is easy to get overwhelmed. Taste palates vary widely and can change without any visible signs. Some shudder at the thought of having sliced pickled okra with blue cheese, or having honey roasted baby potatoes with a hard cheese might seem a bit much, but ultimately, it's all about balancing the taste. Before giving any cheese and food pairing a try, the first step begins with accepting the fact that no one knows if a combination will work unless it's tried out!

By Iris Farina
Photo: Ls Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed

IN SEARCH OF COMFORT FOOD

BY SOBIA AMEEN



Simple pleasures of Monsoon

This season is one of the most fruitful when it comes to delicious local produce. And here are some quick and simple recipes to take full advantage of the produce and make something utterly delicious.

MANGO, ROSE AND CARDAMOM LIMEADE

This is a simple syrup that can be made and stored in the refrigerator and is perfect for humid days.

Ingredients

- ½ cup water
- ½ cup fresh lime juice
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup ripe mango
- 1½ tbsp dried rose petals
- 1 tsp cardamom powder

Method

In a small pot, add the water, sugar, mango, dried rose petals and cardamom powder over medium heat. Bring to a boil and keep stirring until the consistency is of a syrup. Add the ½ cup of fresh lime juice, this changes the colour of the syrup to a beautiful pink. Strain using a strainer in to a glass jar and let the syrup cool. Serve with chilled water or carbonated water.

THAI PRAWN AND LYCHEE/MANGO SALAD

This salad is perfect for the season as it is light,



fresh and cooling. Lychees can be replaced with ripe mangos, or both of the seasonal fruits can be used for this salad.

Ingredients

- 4 cups water
- 500g prawns (deshelled and cleaned)
- 20 lychees (peeled, halved and destoned) or 1 large ripe mango (peeled and cut into cubes)

- 2 cups arugula or a salad leaf of your choice
- 1 cup fresh mint (chopped)
- 1 cup fresh coriander (chopped)
- 2 tbsp spring onions (chopped)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- For the dressing —*
- Juice from half a lime
- 1 red chilli
- 1 tbsp jaggery



- 2 tsp fish sauce

For the toppings —

- Large handful roasted peanuts (roughly chopped)
- Small handful crispy fried onions or garlic (optional)

Method

In a medium saucepan, bring the water to a boil, reduce the flame to medium and add salt (about ½ to 1 teaspoon). Poach the prawns for 4-5 minutes until they turn opaque pink. If they start curling into C's, they have been overcooked. The prawns can be transferred to an ice bath or simply kept in the fridge to cool.

In a large mixing bowl, add the lychees/ mangos, arugula, fresh mint leaves, fresh coriander leaves and spring onions. Lightly season with salt and pepper before adding the poached prawns.

In a mortar and pestle or an electric grinder, add the juice from half a lime, red chilli, jaggery and fish sauce and turn into a dressing. Pour this over the salad and mix well.

Plate the salad and serve with roasted peanuts and crispy fried onions or garlic.

Food and Photo: Sobia Ameen