

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



**Mediterranean Appetizer Board
By Susie Iventosch**

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 up how big you want to make it. This one is a fairly small board, so I was a bit limited on space.

Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



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-Jalapeño Hummus

(Makes about 1 1/2 cups)

INGREDIENTS

1-2 jalapeños 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 jalapeños, and coarsely dice. Place diced jalapeños 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 jalapeño, 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 jalapeños 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.

Did you visit older parents during the holidays?

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC

Many people visited Mom and Dad this holiday season: a first visit in almost two years. What you observed might have been concerning and now you're back home and wonder "What support is appropriate and how do I find it for them?"

Some might have noticed during the pandemic via phone or video calls: (A) the repeating of stories, (B) denial of any needs, (C) what you think might be false reporting of important information. The Alzheimer's Association says that over the pandemic there has been a 16% increase in the number of persons diagnosed.

What should families do if they walk into what is often described as a "hornets' nest?" I hope you held off on giving advice too soon. This is something that, in order to be successful, needs to be addressed

more slowly. Overreacting leads to resistance. If you respond with "you should" or are overly parental, telling your parent what to do, you seldom get cooperation.

The pandemic has been hard on solo seniors: those living alone and those who were in assisted living these past two years. These situations increased both depression and dementia.

Knowing how to have a conversation with your parents about the "What if's of a longer life" can be productive if you (1) didn't do it on the day of a celebration and (2) you have prepared them ahead of time for the conversation.

Many older adults welcome these discussions because, once they have discussed all the "What if's" scenarios of growing older and discussed their values and wants with family, it can relieve some unexpressed stress or worry. Then you can become the resource collector and, in the end, it will give

you a sense of doing what is right when you are called to assist in making medical decisions or in choosing a retirement community.

If you saw memory decline, personal care that is neglected, unpaid bills, and more clutter, you might be looking at a safety issue as well. This is when you will need to take action sooner to ensure that your parents are not in any jeopardy. That will require legal documents like the Advance Health Care Directives as well as some local professional guidance.

Families often think that a senior living community is the only answer and sometimes it can be the best solution. However, over 80% of seniors want to stay in their own homes till the end of life. It is important to first try the local support systems that support aging in place – such as the www.LamorindaVillage.org. And, if your parents are at a distance, already resistant and you are worried about safety, I think consulting with a Pro-

fessional Geriatric Care Manager would be a great help in designing a plan with all the local options for in-home or retirement living. You can find that professional at www.AgingLifeCare.org. Look for a professional with a license and certifications.

I teach a series of four free Zoom classes for those concerned about someone with a dementia. They are usually on the second Friday at 11 a.m., but the February class will be on the 18th. You can sign up on my website www.LindaFodriniJohnson.com. On Zoom, I also co-lead a support group for those caring for someone with a dementia. This is twice a month through LOPC in Lafayette. Send me an email if you would like to join. It is the first and third Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. My email is LindaFJ620@outlook.com

The big message is that you are not alone and having professional guidance and support can make this life journey less stressful for

everyone in the family.



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989. Eldercare Services is now a division of Home Care Assistance and continues to provide Bay Area families with care management, advocacy, counseling, support groups and education.

Love and algorithms, 'I'm Your Man' from Germany an intelligent, romantic sci-fi film

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Maren Eggert portrays Alma as a rigid middle-aged woman who is intellectually very strong and powerful but also has hidden frailties. Her fight between what her intel-

ligence and her reason tells her and what her emotional weakness leads her to do is touching and so well depicted. Overall, it is the dangers of the seductive facilities and shortcuts given to us by technology that Schrader illustrates so

well here. In an interview for the Berlin Film Festival where "Ich bin Dein Mensch" ("I'm Your Man") was presented, the director said that what attracted her in the short story by Emma Braslavsky that serves as the base of this

movie, are the unanswered questions the story raises.

Besides the crafty story and excellent acting, the attraction of the movie comes also from the slightly sci-fi esthetics created by the well-mastered cinematogra-

phy. The film will be presented for a least a week at the Orinda Theater by the International Film Showcase starting on Jan. 21. Tickets at orindamovies.com