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Meat & Cheese Pairing Chart

Find your meat on the left, read across to a cheese. Each square says how well they pair and why.

CLASSIC The classic match · **GOOD** A good match · **WITH A BRIDGE** Add honey, jam or fruit to the bite · **SKIP** Skip it on the same cracker

Meat ↓ · Cheese →	Fresh & milky Burrata, mozzarella, ricotta	Soft-ripened Brie, camembert, triple-crème	Goat cheese Fresh chèvre, Humboldt Fog	Semi-soft & mild Havarti, young gouda, provolone	Alpine & nutty Gruyère, comté, emmental	Aged & firm Manchego, aged cheddar, parm	Blue Gorgonzola, stilton
Dry-cured ham Prosciutto & jamón	**CLASSIC** Cool milk against silky salt. Prosciutto with burrata is the Italian summer classic.	**GOOD** Two gentle textures. Fine together, better with a fig jam or pear in between.	**GOOD** Chèvre's tang lifts the ham's sweetness. Roll them together for an easy bite.	**GOOD** Mild and melty works, but the cheese can make delicate ham taste flat.	**GOOD** Nutty and sweet together. Speck with a mountain cheese is a natural match.	**CLASSIC** Same region, same long ageing: Parma ham with Parmigiano, jamón with manchego.	**WITH A BRIDGE** Blue drowns delicate ham. Use a mild gorgonzola dolce and add honey or melon.
Mild salami Genoa, hard salami, saucisson	**GOOD** Fresh mozzarella cools a garlicky salami. The antipasto platter pairing.	**GOOD** Salty salami against buttery brie. Rich, so keep the slices thin.	**GOOD** Goat cheese's tang cuts through the salami's fat.	**CLASSIC** Salami and provolone, salami and havarti: the deli pairing that never misses.	**GOOD** Gruyère's nuttiness is good with saucisson. The French way to do it.	**CLASSIC** Firm with firm and salt with salt: aged cheddar, manchego or parm all work.	**WITH A BRIDGE** Two strong, salty things. Works with a sweet bridge like fig jam or honey.
Spicy salami & chorizo Pepperoni, soppressata, chorizo	**CLASSIC** Cool, milky cheese puts out the fire. Burrata with nduja, mozzarella with pepperoni.	**GOOD** Brie's cream softens chili heat, though the subtle rind gets lost.	**GOOD** Tangy goat cheese cools spice and adds a bright edge.	**CLASSIC** Provolone, pepper jack or havarti: pizza-shop logic, and it works.	**WITH A BRIDGE** Chili heat flattens the nutty notes you pay for in good Gruyère.	**CLASSIC** Chorizo with manchego is Spain's tapas pair; firm cheese stands up to paprika.	**WITH A BRIDGE** Hot salami and a strong blue are too much. Use sweet (mild) soppressata, a creamy blue, and honey or pear between them.
Smoked sausage Summer sausage, landjäger	**WITH A BRIDGE** Smoke overpowers fresh cheese. Fine on a kids' board, not a standout.	**WITH A BRIDGE** Smoke and a mushroomy rind clash a bit. Add pepper jelly to bridge them.	**WITH A BRIDGE** Smoky and tangy pull apart. A sweet jelly helps.	**CLASSIC** Summer sausage with colby jack or young gouda: the gift-box classic.	**GOOD** Swiss-style cheese with smoked sausage is a solid tailgate pair.	**CLASSIC** Sharp cheddar meets tangy, smoky sausage. Add mustard and you're done.	**WITH A BRIDGE** Smoke and blue both shout. A drizzle of honey makes it work.
Cooked ham & deli Ham, mortadella, turkey	**GOOD** Mortadella with burrata or ricotta is a popular Italian pairing. Soft on soft.	**GOOD** Ham and brie: the French sandwich, minus the baguette.	**WITH A BRIDGE** Mild meat and tangy cheese don't add much to each other.	**CLASSIC** Ham and Swiss, turkey and havarti: mild with mild, and always eaten.	**CLASSIC** Sweet cooked ham and nutty Gruyère: a croque monsieur on a cracker.	**GOOD** Ham with sharp cheddar works. The cheese leads, the ham supports.	**WITH A BRIDGE** Blue overwhelms mild ham. Works with pear or apple in the bite.
Air-dried beef Bresaola	**GOOD** Lean beef needs fat, and fresh cheese brings it.	**GOOD** Creamy brie fills in what lean bresaola lacks.	**CLASSIC** Bresaola rolled around goat cheese is a common Italian appetizer.	**GOOD** Fine together, if not exciting. Add arugula and lemon.	**GOOD** Bündnerfleisch with a mountain cheese: same Alpine valleys.	**CLASSIC** Bresaola with shaved Parmigiano, lemon and olive oil: the Lombardy plate.	**GOOD** Beef and blue is a steakhouse pairing, and it works cured too.

The interactive chart, with the exact pairs behind every square: **charcuterielab.com/pairings/meat-and-cheese-chart**

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Pick your meat

The best cheeses for each cured meat, from the classic match down to the one to skip, with pairs to try.

Dry-cured ham

Prosciutto & jamón

Silky, sweet and salty. Easy to overpower, so it likes cheeses that are creamy or nutty rather than loud.

CLASSIC Fresh & milky · Aged & firm

GOOD Soft-ripened · Goat cheese · Semi-soft & mild · Alpine & nutty

BRIDGE Blue

Fresh & milky: Cool milk against silky salt. Prosciutto with burrata is the Italian summer classic.

Aged & firm: Same region, same long ageing: Parma ham with Parmigiano, jamón with manchego.

Pour: Rosé · Pinot Noir · Champagne & Prosecco

Try: Prosciutto di Parma + Fresh Mozzarella · Prosciutto di Parma + Ricotta · Prosciutto di Parma + Burrata · Prosciutto di Parma + Parmigiano-Reggiano

Mild salami

Genoa, hard salami, saucisson

Garlicky, fatty and chewy. The most flexible meat on the board.

CLASSIC Semi-soft & mild · Aged & firm

GOOD Fresh & milky · Soft-ripened · Goat cheese · Alpine & nutty

BRIDGE Blue

Semi-soft & mild: Salami and provolone, salami and havarti: the deli pairing that never misses.

Aged & firm: Firm with firm and salt with salt: aged cheddar, manchego or parm all work.

Pour: Beaujolais · Cabernet Sauvignon · Merlot

Try: Genoa Salami + Provolone · Hard Salami + Colby Jack · Hard Salami + Provolone · Genoa Salami + Aged Cheddar

Spicy salami & chorizo

Pepperoni, soppressata, chorizo

Chili heat and paprika. Wants a cool, creamy cheese to calm it, or a firm one that can stand up to it.

CLASSIC Fresh & milky · Semi-soft & mild · Aged & firm

GOOD Soft-ripened · Goat cheese

BRIDGE Alpine & nutty · Blue

Fresh & milky: Cool, milky cheese puts out the fire. Burrata with nduja, mozzarella with pepperoni.

Semi-soft & mild: Provolone, pepper jack or havarti: pizza-shop logic, and it works.

Pour: Malbec · IPA · Cabernet Sauvignon

Try: Pepperoni + Fresh Mozzarella · Soppressata + Fresh Mozzarella · Soppressata + Burrata · Pepperoni + Provolone

Smoked sausage

Summer sausage, landjäger

Smoky, tangy and a little sweet. Made for mild, melty cheeses and sharp cheddar.

CLASSIC Semi-soft & mild · Aged & firm

GOOD Alpine & nutty

BRIDGE Fresh & milky · Soft-ripened · Goat cheese · Blue

Semi-soft & mild: Summer sausage with colby jack or young gouda: the gift-box classic.

Aged & firm: Sharp cheddar meets tangy, smoky sausage. Add mustard and you're done.

Pour: Lager & Pilsner

Try: Summer Sausage + Colby Jack · Summer Sausage + Gouda (Young) · Summer Sausage + Baby Swiss · Summer Sausage + Aged Cheddar

Cooked ham & deli

Ham, mortadella, turkey

Tender, mild and sweet. Goes with almost any sliceable cheese, best with Swiss-style ones.

CLASSIC Semi-soft & mild · Alpine & nutty

GOOD Fresh & milky · Soft-ripened · Aged & firm

BRIDGE Goat cheese · Blue

Semi-soft & mild: Ham and Swiss, turkey and havarti: mild with mild, and always eaten.

Alpine & nutty: Sweet cooked ham and nutty Gruyère: a croque monsieur on a cracker.

Pour: Chardonnay · Riesling · Chianti & Sangiovese

Try: Smoked Turkey + Havarti · Honey Ham + Baby Swiss · Smoked Turkey + Baby Swiss · Black Forest Ham + Gruyère

Air-dried beef

Bresaola

Lean, deep red and beefy. Needs a cheese that adds the fat it lacks.

CLASSIC Goat cheese · Aged & firm

GOOD Fresh & milky · Soft-ripened · Semi-soft & mild · Alpine & nutty · Blue

Goat cheese: Bresaola rolled around goat cheese is a common Italian appetizer.

Aged & firm: Bresaola with shaved Parmigiano, lemon and olive oil: the Lombardy plate.

Pour: Cabernet Sauvignon · Malbec

Try: Bresaola + Parmigiano-Reggiano · Bresaola + Fresh Mozzarella · Bresaola + Burrata · Bündnerfleisch + Gruyère

1. Match the weight. Delicate ham with gentle cheese; bold salami with firm, aged cheese.

2. Contrast the texture. Cool, creamy cheese against chewy, salty or spicy meat.

3. Bridge the clash. Two loud flavors? Put honey, fig jam or a slice of pear between them.