



Molly Slicker

SWORDFISH GRILL

Charcuterie Board/ Adult Lunchable

Ingredients

- 1 oz. pepper Jack cheese
- 1 oz. sharp cheddar cheese
- 3 slices Genoa salami
- 5 slices pepperoni
- 2 mini gherkin
- 7 red grapes
- 4 slices bagel chips
- 3 slices white baguette bread
- 3 pretzel chips
- 1 strawberry
- Twig of rosemary from a pot out the back door

A few weeks ago, I went on a cross-country road trip to help a friend move. After driving for four days straight, we finally made it to California. It was a beautiful drive full of incredible adventures, and I highly recommend never doing it.

We did everything we were supposed to do along the way – had beignets in New Orleans, tacos in small-town Texas, Arizona iced tea in Arizona. Then we spent our first night in Long Beach as any inspired vagabonds would, sitting on the apartment floor eating Lunchables we got from 7-11.

We reveled in the humor of finally arriving to a new place with endless possibilities and immediately reverting to the safety and convenience of a childhood favorite. We sipped our juice boxes as we tried to remember the last time we had eaten a Lunchable, and it hit me. We eat Lunchables all the time as adults. They're rebranded as charcuterie boards and they usually cost \$20 more.

Go to a nice restaurant with friends? Become the immediate crowd favorite by confidently ordering a charcuterie board for the table. Having a group over for a dinner party? Slice up some stinky cheese, roll up some fatty meats, slap down some crackers, then raise a glass because there's a new Great Gatsby in town. Too busy to make yourself a real meal, so you sneakily eat one of your kid's in-case-of-emergency Lunchables while standing in the kitchen full of shame? You monster.

Growing up, Lunchables (along with other childhood delicacies like Kid Cuisine or Hot Pockets) weren't a frequent occurrence in my household. To my young disdain, my parents were good cooks. Plus, we were three active

kids and Lunchables were a couple dollars a pop! We had Y2K to save up for! But now, sure, we'll pay a restaurant top-dollar to take deli items out of their fridge and place it on a wood slab so we can play an internal game of "Which of these cheeses do I actually like?"

In college, a group of my friends and I would have weekly potlucks. Everyone would act non-chalant about it but would secretly pour for hours over different recipes each week. I always brought the same thing: meat, cheese, fruit and crackers that I had picked up on my way there. I'd arrange it on a platter, watch it disappear, and bask in the glory of beating the system.

Whoever does marketing for these fancy cheese and meat plates is a genius. It takes the simplicity of a great snack, pairs it with actual quality products and gives it a fancy French name so we can feel good about ourselves. Sure, it lacks the perfectly circular rubbery cold cuts and the candy treat that comes with it, but we carry on. It's part of adulthood.

Charcuterie boards are adult Lunchables, and now we can all be the cool kid in the lunchroom.



A charcuterie board makes a great snack simple.

SUBMITTED