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CUT THE CHEESE

Host of Cheese Slices, author of a book by the same name and a certified Master of Cheese, Will Studd has been travelling the world for decades in search of the greatest cheeses. Here, he tells us how to ensure our Christmas platters make for happy holiday eating.

SOURCE :: Find a good cheese shop with someone behind the counter who can tell you what's good, because handmade cheeses vary from day to day and season to season. And always taste before you buy.

SPEND :: Instead of buying five or six cheeses, it's better to buy one or two really great cheeses. People think \$100 is too expensive for cheese, but you don't need more than 50 grams, which is \$5 – less than a glass of wine.

REST :: Cheese should never be served straight from the fridge. Get it out two or three hours before you want to serve it and just cover it with a damp tea towel. An awful lot of good cheese is wrecked because it's eaten cold.

POUR :: Only serve one cheese and you only need one type of wine. For example, blue cheese and red wine don't go, so you'll need to serve it with a sticky wine. But if you want to serve a cheddar, you'll need a red wine.

SERVE :: Something I like to do at Christmas is buy a triple-cream cheese and cut the top off it so people can just dip into it with a spoon. Crackers interfere with the cheese – French baguettes are the best way to go.