



Platters and Boards: Beautiful, Casual Spreads for Every Occasion

Shelly Westerhausen , Wyatt Worcel (With)

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***Platters and Boards* - Entertaining dishes and party dishes your guests will love**

Entertaining and party dishes from *Platters and Boards*: Celebrated author and food blogger Shelly Westerhausen shares the secrets to creating casually chic spreads anyone can make and everyone will enjoy (and envy) in her bestselling *Platters and Boards cookbook*. This visual cornucopia of a cookbook is the guide to entertaining with effortless style.

***Platters and Boards* is an inspiring resource for throwing unforgettable get-togethers:** Organized by time of day, 40 contemporary arrangements are presented with gorgeous photography, easy-to-prepare recipes, suggested meat and drink pairings, and notes on preparation and presentation.

Helpful advice includes:

Tips on portioning

Guides to picking surfaces and vessels

Recommendations for pairing complementary textures and flavors

A handy chart featuring board suggestions for a variety of occasions (from holiday parties to baby showers)

Fans of *Cook Beautiful*, *The Art of the Cheese Plate*, *InStyle Parties*, *Magnolia Table*, and *Cravings* will love *Platters and Boards*.

Platters and Boards: Beautiful, Casual Spreads for Every Occasion Details

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Shipshapeeatworthy says

When I was a kid I loved the foods at big family gatherings -- little pickles, cubed cheeses, cut fruit and veg, cold cuts, chips, crackers -- lots of imagination and a little something for everyone. Sometimes I would stick with the stand-by faves or there were times when I would venture out of my comfort zone to try something new. Thinking back on those spreads whatever else they were they were celebratory. Seeing it in my mind's eye makes me smile. So with this new book *Platters and Boards* from Shelley Westerhausen (her book *Vegetarian Heartland* that came out late last spring is great) and Wyatt Worcel I couldn't wait to dive in and try some of their board themes. At the heart of the book they have really tuned into something here: this book is meant to take those special and celebratory moments of bonding over shared food into the realm of the everyday.

For those of you who maybe would see this as a book just for occasions -- it's not. Well, it's for both really. *Platters and Boards* provide templates for both special occasions and just a casual weeknight meal. What's really great is (aside from the fact that each of the boards require very little cooking) that they've organized the book into five main sections: Morning, Afternoon, Evening, Anytime, and Essentials; and within those first 4 sections they provide creative themes upon which the platters/boards are built. In the introductory section there are lists under A Board for Every Occasion that have taken all of those themes and placed them into different event/holiday/party categories. So if you're hosting let's say a baby shower they list ten themes that would be compatible. Entertaining has never been so easy! They also explore in-depth how to create your board/platter by examining what you may need in the way of actual boards/platters (what materials best suit different foods or ingredients), ingredients, portioning (how to serve one to one hundred people), and then a few notes on serving and storing.

Although Westerhausen is vegetarian, Worcel is not so in each of the themes he provides a "Meaty Suggestion" but to be honest this book really suits any diet. You can substitute or omit any board component so that if you're gluten-free or vegan you're free to swap in some gorgeous gf bread or beautiful vegan cheese. I can't stress enough how creative, versatile, and customizable this book really is! I had no difficulties sourcing any of the ingredients (except for the raspberry dust used for a board component for their Date Night theme which I easily made myself by oven-drying some fresh raspberries). In addition to their "Meaty Suggestions" they also offer "Drink Pairings" for each theme.

All of the themes I tried were ones that I scaled down to suit my family of three because in the beginning I realized that I could create some weeknight/weekend un-events (I'm thinking of that part in *Alice in Wonderland* where she arrives at the "un-birthday" party -- why wait for special occasions?) . My four-year-old had no idea what breakfast in bed was but when I put together the Breakfast in Bed Board with the Miniature Tomato, Garlic, and Goat Cheese Frittatas she could totally see its appeal! Here I swapped out bagels for some delicious locally baked sourdough. Everything was scrumptious and transformed our Sunday morning into something most convivial.

What I think I'm appreciating most about this book is how each platter or board becomes a showcase for beautiful whole food ingredients and really provides an excuse to shop seasonally and locally. When I was building up the Happy Hour Platter I loved seeing the rainbow of ingredients and while I don't normally buy potato chips I didn't feel too bad adding them to the platter because they were the perfect foil to all the fresh, vibrant produce. Both the chips and veg tasted great with the Red Wine Caramelized Onion Dip!

Our Friday night became a real party when I brought out the Movie Night Board full of homemade (!!) Chicago-Style Caramel and (I used White) Cheddar Popcorn and Smoky Sweet Mixed Nuts (along with fresh fruit, cheese, candy, and Chex Mix). We turned on Netflix and unabashedly relished the treats along with a movie. You would have thought by my husband and daughter's reactions that I spent a lot of time cooking and fussing! What I came to realize is that pulling together different components and arranging them in pretty bowls on the board really added such a "wow" factor.

One of the first themes I tried was the Parfait Board with the Granola Two Ways (Sweet Cinnamon Cherry and Ginger Apricot) not because I needed to feed a crowd of people on a weekend morning but I do make parfaits for my daughter and I thought it might be fun to set up their parfait station with all the fixin's. Now that she's 4 she's all about doing things for herself so all of these board set-ups really helped her to feel independent. It's here where all the parents with discerning eaters should take note -- this book is fantastic for creating mealtime harmony. This is a fun way to enjoy a meal but also it gives young eaters a chance to exert some of their personality on their plate so that it's about what they will eat rather than what they won't. Additionally if you're a meal-planner this is also a really easy, low-fuss way to get supper on the table. Almost everything can be made or prepped ahead of time so that you're not facing a week full of kitchen drudgery (and did I mention that this is a really fun way to eat?).

The tagline on the cover of Platters and Boards says it best -- Beautiful, Casual Spreads for Every Occasion. Full of enticing food and creative ideas this is one book that will get a lot of use in my house. Even though I started trying themes for our everyday meals I'm looking at a lot of their ideas and starting to plan some occasions to entertain our friends and to try some of their other board themes!

Please note that this review is an excerpt of one posted to www.shipshapeeatworthy.wordpress.com

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chronicle Books and Raincoast Books for providing me with a free, review copy of this book. I did not receive monetary compensation for my post, and all thoughts and opinions expressed are my own.

Jenna Amundson says

Digging this! Love all the recipes and board ideas. On my to-buy list for sure! Gorgeous. I also like the boards are all vegetarian with meat options. Excellent.

Fiore777 says

I haven't seriously considered putting together spreads like those featured in this book before. But after reading through it I'm feeling motivated by how surprisingly easy putting it all together would be. Mostly about getting the proportions right and choosing harmonious flavors. And the presentation! I'm inspired by all the different ways to assemble the different platters in the lovely photographs.

Jessica says

This is straight up food eye candy. Beautiful photographs of "spreads" of various types of snack foods arranged on wooden boards or platters that you'll probably never actually make, but love to look at and dream. If you entertain a lot this could be a useful cookbook, but I think for most people this is just a fantasy cookbook of the type of person you wish you were. The spreads are arranged by time of day and the final section is recipes for some spread "essentials" like crackers, cheese straws, condiments, etc. I did like that for each spread the author included not just a list of items for that spread, but also an actual recipe for something included in that spread. There are a few things I'd like to try to make and while I doubt I'll ever be the person who throws together spreads like this, I could see making the Southern-style board or creating the mini cheeseball spread for a holiday party. Definitely a beautiful cookbook with lots of great party food ideas.

Mary C says

I only add cookbooks to My Books after I have successfully tried recipes from them!!
