

# SAZ'S™

## Cooking Notes

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Small Plates for the Holidays

### Small Plates Make Festive Parties

You may be hosting a casual party or a fancy cocktail soirée - no matter, small plates will be a big hit with your guests. Why? Small plates are festive. You can offer a visual feast and a flavor sensation all on one beautiful little plate. You can expand beyond the typical finger food. You can enjoy a series of courses and still feel svelt at the end of the evening.

So what makes a small plate great? Color, texture, and a little creativity. You can make almost any main course a sophisticated small plate. Here are a few ideas...

- Caprese Salad - instead of the traditional big tomato and mozzarella slices with basil, try halving a cherry tomato and filling it with homemade pesto and fresh shaved mozzarella. You can top with a small basil leaf for a dash of artistry. Plate with three halves and splash a little pesto around the trio.
- Baguettes lend themselves to beautiful mini open-faced sandwiches. You can also use cocktail loaves of rye and pumpernickel. Simply spread a little of your favorite soft cheese on a slice of baguette - from a basic cream cheese to Boursin or room temperature goat's cheese - then add your favorite flavors: caviar (garnished with cornichons), lox with capers, cucumbers and radishes with chives. Another twist is a funky BLT with a slice of plum tomato, a festive green *like frisee*, and a small slice of crisp bacon vertically for effect. You could pair a mini grilled cheese (topless or not) with a shooter of tomato (or gazpacho) soup. Or a tuna tartare on a mini-toast with wasabi drizzled on and around the main attraction.
- Seafood is a natural for small plates. From a classy shrimp cocktail or a more exotic shrimp dish, to scallops or crabcakes — seafood makes a great small plate. Try curried, Cajun, blackened or jerk. Seafood is a seriously sexy small plate. Thai, or Nicoise. Seafood of perfection. Whether you choose miniature cupcakes, cheese cakes, tarts or truffles - a plate of three pleasures trumps a plate of one almost any day of the week.
- Dessert is another small plate



The main ingredient of any party is fun. And spreading the flavor around is another facet in making your next party the talk of the town - or of your friends.

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