

## Shmanners 181: Charcuterie and Cheese Boards

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**Travis:** Hi, friends! Travis here. Just a quick content warning – this episode, we talk a lot about the consumption and production of meat. Teresa and I are both meat eaters. But if that is something that you find disturbing, uh, then perhaps skip this one. And now, on with the episode!

Hey, you put the 'cute' in 'charcuterie'!

**Teresa:** That's pretty cheesy.

**Travis:** It's Shmanners!

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

**Teresa:** And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

**Travis:** And you're listening to Shmanners!

**Teresa:** It's extraordinary etiquette...

**Travis:** ... for ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

**Teresa:** Hello, dear.

**Travis:** How are you?

**Teresa:** Y'know... I... I am good. I'm pregnant. As we have said several times.

**Travis:** What?!

**Teresa:** And y'know what? We went to this great party last night. And there was hardly anything I'm supposedly allowed to eat.

**Travis:** Ohh, is this our transition into talking about the topic?

**Teresa:** It is.

**Travis:** [gasps] How awesome! You did a great job. Yeah, lot of meat and cheese. Lot of soft cheeses.

**Teresa:** Lot of soft, runny cheeses, and delicious meats... now, I know. I know that there are varying opinions. But generally, here in the United States, the rule is, if it's a cold cut, you gotta heat it up.

**Travis:** Gotta be a hot cut.

**Teresa:** Gotta be a hot cut. And there's no way, with a meat and cheese spread like they had at the party, that I could do that. And then, all the delicious, runny cheeses... I just—I wanted—I really wanted to indulge, but... I abstained until January. [laughs]

**Travis:** Okay. Thank you.

**Teresa:** Travis, will you tell me about every piece of delicious meat you've ever eaten?

**Travis:** I mean, I've eaten a lot of meat...

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That is my—I—when I was in Vegas with my friends, Bob and Bradbury, we went to this restaurant called Bazaar. It was very good. And they brought out a cheese plate which I could not, by sight, identify any of them.

**Teresa:** Ooh.

**Travis:** It was very good. And the last time we were in Vegas, uh, you and I... do you remember, they came around with like, a thing of cheese, and kind of did a build your own cheese plate there by your side—by your like, tableside?

**Teresa:** Yes, I do recall that.

**Travis:** We should be up front. Uh, this episode is probably going to stretch into multiple episodes, because believe it or not, there's a lot to talk about.

**Teresa:** There's a lot to talk about.

**Travis:** So we'll probably just talk about charcuterie for this episode, and maybe the next one, and *then* cheese plates.

**Teresa:** Because, strictly speaking, charcuterie only, uh... only applies to the meats.

**Travis:** Oh, really? I thought it was like, the nibbles, y'know? The cheese, the bread, the—

**Teresa:** Nope.

**Travis:** Nope.

**Teresa:** Just the meats.

**Travis:** Okay. We have the meats. Y'know, like the commercial? You know.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Like the commercial. If it ain't meat, it ain't charcuterie.

**Travis:** I've always said that. You know I've always said that.

**Teresa:** [laughing]

**Travis:** You know. Don't act like I don't always say that.

**Teresa:** So uh, what I'm envisioning is charcuterie part one and two, and then cheese plates.

**Travis:** So there's a lot about charcuterie?

**Teresa:** There's so much!

**Travis:** Really? Because I did not become, uh, aware of the term 'charcuterie' until probably maybe 24, 25? Like, that—it was not a term I was very, uh, I don't know, accustomed to until you started to see a lot more like, artisanal, y'know, kind of uh, gastro pub-y kind of places start to pop up. It wasn't a term I was familiar with.

**Teresa:** I think when I was growing up, we called it a party tray.

**Travis:** Right? Or a party platter, or... yeah.

**Teresa:** Or a party platter. With like, the cheese, the meat, some kind of like, I don't know, mustard and crackers. Right? Kind of all arranged.

**Travis:** Yeah. Adult Lunchable.

**Teresa:** Adult Lunchable. That's right. And that was—that was really it until... I was able to go to a restaurant on my own and be like, "Hey, bring me this." She points to a menu.

**Travis:** The charcuterie.

**Teresa:** The charcuterie.

**Travis:** And—okay, so, I guess... where do we start?

**Teresa:** Let's start six thousand years ago!

**Travis:** [wavy sound effect] Whoa!

**Teresa:** [laughing]

**Travis:** Look at this, it's six thousand years ago when dinosaurs roamed the earth!

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** No.

**Teresa:** Not quite.

**Travis:** When... there were... big bugs, probably.

**Teresa:** I mean... okay.

**Travis:** Scarabs? They're big.

**Teresa:** Sure.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, so, specifically speaking, charcuterie is a method and a thing, okay?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So the method is preserving, smoking, curing. Right?

**Travis:** Okay, see, this does make sense to me if you just look at the word, right? It contains the word 'char,' and 'cut.' Right? So like—

**Teresa:** That's a good way of looking at it.

**Travis:** Seems like sliced. Right? Sliced and smoked meats.

**Teresa:** Not exactly what the French word means.

**Travis:** That's not what it means, but that's always been my kind of like, shorthand.

**Teresa:** Sure. Yeah.

**Travis:** Char, cute, erie.

**Teresa:** That makes perfect sense to me.

**Travis:** Thank you. It's my little pneumonic device.

**Teresa:** So then, also like I said, it is the method and the noun.

**Travis:** And the madness.

**Teresa:** Uh, most common. You—y'know, you got your ham. Your prosciutto. Your capicola.

**Travis:** Your salami.

**Teresa:** Pancetta. And even some types of bacon.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So, here's the thing about... the way it probably happened.

**Travis:** Okay. Someone tripped, spilled some meat on a plate, and they said, "Wait a minute, this looks nice."

**Teresa:** [laughs] No.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Although, it probably was an accident.

**Travis:** Okay! So I wasn't that far off!

**Teresa:** [laughing]

**Travis:** Alright. Okay.

**Teresa:** Well, the method was probably an accident, right? So, uh, I said six thousand years ago, because it's probably as old as homosapiens. Right?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Cooking things over a fire. But again, it was probably an accident. So what probably happened... no one was there. They can't tell us. But it makes perfect sense to our brains now, that in order to keep their meat from spoiling or getting bugs in it, or even being attacked by other animals, scavengers, early homosapiens probably tied it above a fire. Right? Not meaning to cook it...

**Travis:** But just 'cause the fire would keep things away, and the smoke would keep bugs away and stuff.

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** Okay. Make it harder for other homosapiens to steal it.

**Teresa:** Yes it would. So then, they would find it in the morning, after it's sitting over this fire, not like, caramelizing, 'cause it wasn't quite hot enough.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** But having sat there all night, it would be, y'know... hot, tender, delicious, and smoky.

**Travis:** It would be beef jerky.

**Teresa:** It would be bee—I mean, if it was a beef.

**Travis:** Yeah, it wouldn't quite be beef jerky, but it would be...

**Teresa:** Le boeuf?

**Travis:** Le boeuf? Shia LeBeouf.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Hi, I'm Travis McElroy, spokesman for Shia LeBeouf Jerky.

**Teresa:** Nooo.

**Travis:** You can do it! Do it! Eat the jerky.

**Teresa:** [laughing] Oh, don't send our friends down an internet rabbit hole, please.

**Travis:** I'm just saying, I can't be the first person to make the joke, Shia LeBeef Jerky, right? Like, that can't be... if that's mine, TM TM TM. I'm gonna sell that product.

**Teresa:** [laughing] Alright. Um, so, this is probably why you find examples of cured meats in practically every society, right? And the idea of preserving food really helps keep the, um, keep the timeline of becoming, like, a settlement, a village...

**Travis:** Yeah, because you can—you don't have to—you can—you can, y'know, kill an animal, right? And then, keep the meat long enough that you don't have to just keep killing animals all day, right? Every day.

**Teresa:** Right.



**Travis:** And so, that way, you can kind of like, rest and settle a little bit and say, "We can take some time between," and like, chill out and spend time. Just some me time.

**Teresa:** Some me time.

**Travis:** A lot—they were probably taking a lot of long baths. A lot of meditation sessions.

**Teresa:** Oh, you think so? Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

**Travis:** A lot of spa treatments. A lot of mani-pedis. Uh-huh. Yeah. Your face is saying no, but my heart is saying yes.

**Teresa:** So, this contributed to the settling of humans, as opposed to the kind of nomadic nature that they had before.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, so, for example... there are sausage recipes that date further back than ancient Greece.

**Travis:** [gasps] Really?

**Teresa:** And even before that, ancient Egyptians were fattening geese for the liver, possibly making foie gras, but I mean... probably just eating the fatty liver.

**Travis:** Wow. That's a little mind blowing.

**Teresa:** It is a little bit.

**Travis:** I don't know why I'm so surprised to find that sausage is so old.

**Teresa:** So, when you go back far enough, there has always been this kind of nose-to-tail eating, right? And you got all these little bits. What are you gonna do with all the little bits?

**Travis:** Make hot dogs.

**Teresa:** Make hot dogs! That's right. Grind 'em up, make a sausage.

**Travis:** Well, I don't want to know how it's made. [laughs]

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That's a little joke, folks.

**Teresa:** So it makes complete sense that like, sausage was the second thing after slice of meat.

**Travis:** Yeah. It's the best thing since sliced meat.

**Teresa:** Um, but the thing that charcuterie plates really center around in most cultures, and in fact, today—

**Travis:** Is a party?

**Teresa:** Is... pig.

**Travis:** Ohh!

**Teresa:** Pork.

**Travis:** Okay. Yeah, y'know, that's fair. I actually—now I'm sitting here, thinking about it. I maybe have seen some like, steak tartar, or maybe even some like, lox or something on charcuterie, but most of the time—

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm. Yeah, cured fish sometimes.

**Travis:** But most of the time, it is like, as you said, like a capicola, bacon, a salami, pork-based food.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Um, and it's a very versatile food. And the Romans were the first ones who made standards for the raising, killing, and cooking of pork, as well as regulating its production. And the Roman Empire was probably the first, uh, the first group to turn pork butchery into a trade.

**Travis:** Okay. I'm not surprised by them. The Romans? Very industrious.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Very industrious.

**Travis:** They made trades out of stuff left and right.

**Teresa:** They certainly did. They had like, scholars.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** Scribes.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Doctors.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** Priests.

**Travis:** Okay. Keep going.

**Teresa:** And butchers.

**Travis:** Okay. And butchers.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Um, but... but.

**Travis:** Oh?

**Teresa:** La François. The French!

**Travis:** Yes, I've heard of them.

**Teresa:** The French were the ones who probably made it into art. Y'know, like they do. They just take every—

**Travis:** [imitating a French accent] We will take your food, and we will make it very pretty.

**Teresa:** And take it and make it art.

**Travis:** [imitating a French accent] And you will eat it, and you will be lucky that you ate it. You're welcome.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Um, so, the actual words, 'char,' is the French word, 'flesh.'

**Travis:** Oh. Okay.

**Teresa:** And 'cut' is the French word—

**Travis:** Adorable.

**Teresa:** 'Cook.'

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** And so, cooked flesh makes total sense. And the French were the first people to actually separate charcuterie from butchery in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** There was a guild that they—

**Travis:** A charcuterie guild?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** Whoa!

**Teresa:** Totally! Um, because the charcuter was the only person who could sell smoked, cured, and fully cooked pork products made from meat and offal, which is everything but the flesh and bones.

**Travis:** O-F-F-A-L.

**Teresa:** Correct. And the law separated from the butchers. So, there wasn't so much competition, really, in the meat industry. You had to have, if you... if you cooked it, it had to be sold in one place. If it was raw, it had to be sold in another.

**Travis:** I bet that was good for business for both of them, too, right?

**Teresa:** Indeed.

**Travis:** It was just like, oh, do you want—the charcuter would have to go to the butcher to get the meat, and if someone was buying meat from the butcher, they would send them over to the charcuter. Right? Like, they probably worked well together.

**Teresa:** Sounds great.

**Travis:** I would hope.

**Teresa:** I think it's a good partnership to have.

**Travis:** Do you think that we will see the—is that a thing now? Are there charcuters now?

**Teresa:** Yeah, totally!

**Travis:** Not just butchers?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Okay. I jumped way to the end. Anyways, we were still on Rome.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Okay. So, these French charcuters... no, we're done with Rome.

**Travis:** Oh, we're in France. Okay.

**Teresa:** We're in France.

**Travis:** Sorry. [makes a wavy sound effect] Woo woo woo woo woo woo!  
Oh, now we're in France. That was the problem, we hadn't traveled yet.

**Teresa:** Were probably the first people to really perfect bacon and ham and head cheese, which is not cheese.

**Travis:** It's the brain.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** No?

**Teresa:** No. It is kind of like meat jelly.

**Travis:** But it's in the head.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** No? Then why's it called head cheese?

**Teresa:** Ehh...?

**Travis:** Okay. [sighs] So it's not cheese. It's not from the head.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Oh my gosh. Oh my goodness gracious. My head cheese hurts.

**Teresa:** And of course, pâté.

**Travis:** Now, I know pâté.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** She works down at the DMV.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Sorry, I thought you said Patty.

**Teresa:** Nooo.

**Travis:** Sorry, sorry. That's my fault.

**Teresa:** Nooooo. And so, pâté is a process in which meat is cubed or chopped, sometimes even like, minced, salted heavily, and then cooked slowly in fat until it can be like...

**Travis:** Dipped.

**Teresa:** Shredded into a paste. Right?

**Travis:** Yeah. Yeahhh.

**Teresa:** I'm a fan. I like it.

**Travis:** I enjoy pâté, yes. I mean, in general.

**Teresa:** Sometimes, it's hard to think about what this delicious meat mousse used to be.

**Travis:** We probably should've mentioned this like, right at the top. But surely, people have caught on by now. Teresa and I are both meat eaters, and so—

**Teresa:** Maybe we should put a trigger warning.

**Travis:** Yeah, we'll put a warning at the top. We talk a lot about meat and meat production in this.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** That is a good call. I'm gonna write it down so I don't forget.

**Teresa:** Alright. I will continue talking while you are writing. Alright. So, even though the two—the cooked and the uncooked were separated in this French town, by the time of the French Revolution, there were nearly 100 master charcuters working in just the capital city.

**Travis:** Wow!

**Teresa:** That's like... I mean, if you think about it, when I think about France, I think about bread.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** But maybe if you stepped out of the bakery and turned to your left, there was a charcuterie. [laughs]

**Travis:** I guarantee you there were like, four shops in a row. And it was like, baker, butcher, charcuter, like... wine.



**Teresa:** Grocer. Oh, wine!

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** You don't need vegetables if you have grapes!

**Travis:** No. No. This is all you need. Then maybe the grocer. So maybe five, and then maybe... I don't know, a bank?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Uh, school?

**Teresa:** It's the French Revolution. They don't have money.

**Travis:** A church?

**Teresa:** Oh, yeah, maybe.

**Travis:** A church isn't really a store, though. Anyways! It's not important.

**Teresa:** [laughing]

**Travis:** You need somewhere to get, uh, y'know, Pogs.

**Teresa:** ... What?

**Travis:** Pogs? Where did they get their Pogs? Did they just make 'em?

**Teresa:** Prob... probably? Out of wood, right?

**Travis:** No. The Pog wasn't around until like, 1980.

**Teresa:** [snickering] You... you made me play with you.

**Travis:** I know!

**Teresa:** And then you shut it down!

**Travis:** I did, 'cause I didn't see where the game was going. You see, I got scared.

**Teresa:** Ohh. Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And so I ran away scared.

**Teresa:** Yeah. We diverge from the French. Let's go into the Spanish.

**Travis:** [wavy sound effect] Woo woo woo woo woo woo!

**Teresa:** And the Italian.

**Travis:** [quieter wavy sound effect] Woo woo woo woo woo woo.

**Teresa:** Here's the thing, right? When you add salt to cured meat, it creates an entirely new, potentially lactic flavor, that different chefs and butchers have played with for centuries, right?

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** So all you need to do is, when you go to a different place, say... Spain, right? They are usually famous for their very lean pork. It's not a very fatty meat at all, and it's a lot darker than uh, than American... I mean, the United States, and the UK, and places like that, who we've kind of bred the fat out of our meats.

And then, you add salt to it, right? Or you smoke it, you cure it. And so, the same cut, the same amount of salt, the same, like, animal can taste totally different in totally different regions.

**Travis:** Got it.

**Teresa:** So then, what you have is kind of like a good, humored rivalry between a bunch of these European nations.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** That take... y'know, basically, I can make the worst part of the animal taste the best. Oh, no you didn't, Germany, I can do it! That was...

**Travis:** Honey, you're so good at smack talk.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I think it's the passion. You really sell it. Oh no you didn't!

**Teresa:** Oh no! You did not, sir!

**Travis:** Oh, how dare... thou!

**Teresa:** [laughing]

**Travis:** You really put them in their place, baby.

**Teresa:** Uh-huh. So, European sausages, uh, still use a lot of the parts of the pig that we're not allowed to use in the United States, because it really is about nose-to-tail eating. And in fact, it's actually a really good thing, the nose-to-tail eating. So, Leanne Courick, of the Courick Family Charcuterie in Austin, Texas... she credits the resurgence and importance of charcuterie to the slow food movement, which probably started in Italy, around 1985, '86.

And some of the pillars of this movement is a return to local food, farm to table dining, to combat the booming fast food culture, right? That was prevalent in that last half of the century, there.

**Travis:** Well, like I said, if you think about like, how we've become aware of the term now, right? I think about it as like, when you go out to dinner, and you are getting a like, first course, and like, then an appetizer, and then your entrée, right? So like, if you're just sitting down to eat and then

running, right? You don't have time for charcuterie. You don't have time to get a meat plate and a cheese plate or whatever. You're just like, "Well, I just want the hamburger, and then I'm out the door." Right?

**Teresa:** Yeah, totally.

**Travis:** So it does make sense to me of like, why, when you think about the meat tray, the charcuterie, it is a, "We're gonna sit and pick at this while we talk" kind of style.

**Teresa:** And y'know, this return to the slower, right? Also means that we expect better food. Right?

[strange moaning in the background]

**Travis:** [laughs] That's Buttercup. She's hoping to get in one of our laps.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Buttercup really wants—she really wants to sit in my lap, but I just can't have her up here while I talk.

**Travis:** We're working, Buttercup. Can't you see that?

**Teresa:** Uh, it's gonna be slower, it's gonna be more artisanal, it's gotta have a lot of flavor, so we're expecting something to, y'know, be worth the while of slowing down. So, when you think about it this way, and you go backwards, that means that we want animals to be raised healthily, so that they taste better. Right? And we want, uh, every part of the animal to be used, because we're looking for new and different experiences.

So, it's actually been found to be more socially conscious, and better for the environment.

**Travis:** Yes. I understand that, right? Waste not, want not.

**Teresa:** Absolutely. Absolutely. And not to mention, chefs really love it, because it's a good way to be, quote, "innovative," without doing things like, y'know, pureeing or use—selling bags of air, or...

**Travis:** Hey, listen.

**Teresa:** Foaming, and...

**Travis:** Some of us like to eat bags of air, Teresa!

**Teresa:** [laughing] I'm—this point reminds me of... what is the name of the place that they go to for, um, for Tom's bachelor party?

**Travis:** On Parks and Rec?

**Teresa:** Parks and Rec?

**Travis:** I only think of—I think it's a weird name, but I just think of it as like, it looks like the ice planet, Hoth, that they reference in the thing.

**Teresa:** [laughs] And like, the, quote, "Bud light."

**Travis:** Yeah, and it comes as a cotton candy, and then there's a scotch that's like, a hand cream, and then there's also, "May I break your scent sphere?" Just great. One of them where like, flashing light shots.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Yeah. That totally reminds me of that.

**Travis:** I did—when I was at that Bazaar place, I had a foie gras, uh, cotton candy, that was like a cube of foie gras, like, that then they used to collect the cotton candy.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** It was good. And it was weird. I enjoyed it.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Oh my gosh, are you a Tom?

**Travis:** Uh, in many ways. Listen, do I think I deserve the finer things? Yes. I'm awesome. Go on. Please tell us more about charcuterie.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And now move on, as I sit here with my tiny dog in my lap and talk about how much I love cotton candy and foie gras.

**Teresa:** [laughing] Okay. So today, we basically just rip off the French here in the United States, and add things like olives, nuts, jams, fruit, pickles, things like that. Um, but again, specifically speaking... all you need for a charcuterie board is the meats.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So all this extra stuff, we are going to... we're gonna acknowledge it. We're going to move it aside.

**Travis:** That's the dressing. That's the et cetera.

**Teresa:** And we're going to... we're gonna save it. We're gonna save it for the cheese. Okay?

**Travis:** Hey. Hey. Save it for the cheese, buddy.

**Teresa:** [laughing] Save it for the cheese!

**Travis:** Hey. I don't want to hear it. Save it for the cheese.

**Teresa:** Okay. So, how do you make one?

**Travis:** Uhh...

**Teresa:** How do you make a charcuterie board?

**Travis:** First, you need a big slab of wood.

**Teresa:** Okay. That's a good thing to start with.

**Travis:** You're gonna polish it.

**Teresa:** Maybe a pretty tray, or um, slates are very popular.

**Travis:** I think the key is, I think everybody does skew towards something like a big slab of something or whatever. But the reason there is, what it comes down to is space. Right? Lots of open area. Because sometimes, what you end up running into with the plates with the raised sides is, that cuts into the usable space that you actually have to lay out a pretty design, or like, organi—right? Because you don't want things that are like, hanging over the side or whatever.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** So if you have a big, flat tray, then you can use that. I recommend, if you're looking, and you don't want to spend on like a fancy charcuterie board, get a wood cutting board and use that as your charcuterie board.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm. I definitely agree. Not to say that it also doesn't look beautiful if you kind of push things really close together in mounds and such.

**Travis:** Sure. Well, sure. But they have to look like casual mounds.

**Teresa:** Casual.

**Travis:** Like when you go for fake bedhead look. It's like, that of like, "Oh, thank goodness," kind of threw some meat at the plate, and that's where it landed.

**Teresa:** [laughing] Um, some—some basic guidelines. If it's gonna be an appetizer, um, this meat board, it's gonna be an appetizer... think about like, two ounces of meat, and if cheese is also an appetizer, on a different board...

**Travis:** On a—gotta keep `em separated.

**Teresa:** Another two ounces.

**Travis:** Okay. Now, would you adjust that if you had more people, if it was a party versus like a four person dinner?

**Teresa:** I mean, yeah, you would serve more meat. You would serve more food for more people. Two ounces per person is what I'm talking about.

**Travis:** Oh, I see. Gotcha.

**Teresa:** But if it's meant to serve as the main course, I would say for a party, I'd probably put out up to four ounces per person.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, and if you know someone like Travis is coming over, even double that.

**Travis:** Whoa! Whoa, hey!

**Teresa:** Listen. You have been known to bogart a meat tray.

**Travis:** Whoa, whoa! I can be respectful! I let everyone else take firsts before I go for seconds. I am—madam, I am a respectful monster, thank you very much!

**Teresa:** [laughs] Alright.

**Travis:** I am Shrek by movie three, not Shrek in movie one, madam!

**Teresa:** Ohh, okay. Mm. That's a good distinction.

**Travis:** Thank you. I would also add that if you had more people coming, I would also maybe increase... uh, instead of just increasing amount given, maybe also options.



**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Um, because there... y'know, if you're looking at like a party of like, ten people, 12 people, whatever, you can't assume everyone's gonna like the same thing. Um, and having more variety might also save you money instead of just getting like, y'know, four pounds of one—

**Teresa:** Of prosciutto.

**Travis:** Yeah, right? Have some different options for them to pick from.

**Teresa:** Definitely. We'll cover options again a little later. But really, it's important not to be... not to be too intimidated by it. Because like, you really can't do a bad job. It's a pile of delicious meat.

**Travis:** Yeah. Yeah, I think the name often can like, throw people off. I saw people talking about this when we talked about doing the episode, right? Like you said, we both grew up calling them meat trays, meat platter, party platter, something like that. Right? And that's really what it is. Charcuterie is just kind of the official term for it.

But like, I think you could, y'know, fry up some bacon, and chop that into pieces. You could, y'know, get some salami and put that on there. Like, you don't have to—

**Teresa:** Yeah, totally.

**Travis:** You don't have to break the bank to do it.

**Teresa:** I think that the party last night had some very delicious, like, shaved honey ham.

**Travis:** Yes. Yes.

**Teresa:** Which was really good, and you can get that at any deli counter.

**Travis:** Right. And really, what you're doing is like, you're kind of... like you might set up a make it yourself sandwich kind of buffet, right? It's like that, but without the bread. It's just saying like, "Do you want some turkey?" You can put turkey on there. You can put anything on there. Just arrange it so it looks nice.

**Teresa:** Right. And we'll talk about bread in a minute, too.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So uh, when you're actually building your board, you want to think about variety, like you said. And think about texture when you think about variety, because texture is a big player in taste, right?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** So, things like... you might have one of those spreadable pâtés, a tougher jerky-like meat...

**Travis:** Well, like prosciutto usually is the—when it gets dried, is a little bit chewier.

**Teresa:** If it's dried out, yeah.

**Travis:** Right, has a little bit—whereas something like a salami, or a... I mean, even a nice bologna. I've seen—not like we think of it, but like, fancy bologna can be very soft, and y'know, very—have a lot less bite to it.

**Teresa:** Certainly. Um, and you can... and trying to include meat that is dry cured, as opposed to wet cured. Smoked as opposed to cooked. All that kind of stuff affects the texture, and then, I mean, when we talk about cheese, we'll talk about cheese. But also, this applies to cheese. [laughs]

Alright. So then, like I said, texture plays in a lot to flavor. But you can also expand the flavor profile specifically. So like, spicy, if you have the peppered salami. Is that capicola?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** I think. Anyway. Um, and then, extra salty, or extra smoked, or something like that.

**Travis:** I mean, you mentioned honey—like, if we're doing bacon, you could do a maple brown sugar bacon.

**Teresa:** Absolutely.

**Travis:** And that would pair very well with a lot of things.

**Teresa:** Absolutely. Then, do remember that cured meat flavors vary wildly, depending upon the producer and the region. So, why not interview your, uh, your meat monger at your local store?

**Travis:** But maybe don't call them a meat monger.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "Meat monger! Bring me a slice of the capicola! Mm! Delicious!"

**Teresa:** Your deli counter? How's that?

**Travis:** Charcuter.

**Teresa:** Charcuter. I don't know if we have one.

**Travis:** We'll find one.

**Teresa:** Okay. Alright. Um, and the—I'm sure that they will wax poetic about the different flavors from the different places, and you might have to walk away to shut them up. Like...

**Travis:** Yeah. Or just start eating the meat while you make uninterrupted eye contact.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "I eat yo meat!"

**Teresa:** Okay. So um, another thing I stopped you on, but we're back to now, is the bread.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** The flavor, the vessel that the foods, the meats are going to come on. Basically, you have bread, you have crackers. Crackers... usually like a saltine. You don't want to put out like a Ritz, 'cause it has a lot of flavor.

**Travis:** Too much flavor.

**Teresa:** You want the meat to carry the flavor. So, a saltine or... I mean, some of those like, wafer thin captain's crackers or something.

**Travis:** Yes. Once again – don't gotta go fancy.

**Teresa:** Don't gotta go fancy.

**Travis:** The crackers are a delivery system for the meat. This is why— sometimes you can just go, uh, get one of those like, bake it yourself baguettes, right? And then just slice it into tiny slices.

**Teresa:** Absolutely.

**Travis:** Go to town.

**Teresa:** Now, it is recommended—

**Travis:** That'll look fancy as all get out.

**Teresa:** Sure would. It is recommended that it be toasted.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Um, I mean, and if you're getting super fancy, you could grill it.

**Travis:** Mmm.

**Teresa:** Get a little smoky flavor in there.

**Travis:** Y'know, I don't like that. I don't like grilled bread.

**Teresa:** You don't?

**Travis:** Not my thing. No.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Just throw it under the broiler for like, three minutes. That'll be fine.

**Teresa:** Sounds great. Nice and toasty. And when you do this, you want to save the kind of softer, more delicate cuts for the cracker. And the chewier, more hearty things for the bread.

**Travis:** You can, um—actually, Pepperidge Farm, you can get like, individually sliced, like, y'know, the right si—like, cracker sized bread. And they do like a rye and a white and a pumpernickel, I believe, which, for me, that's my jam.

**Teresa:** That sounds delicious.

**Travis:** Yes. Once again, it's a pairing thing, right? That's—some of the time—like, you can get away with spending less money on things by providing what seems like a lot of options, but really like, you didn't spend a ton on those options. Right? That's just a little sneak from me to you.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Well, so, now we've got our meats in a bag from the grocer.

**Travis:** Yeah. Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** And we've got our breads in a bag, and we have this big, large cutting board, and we're gonna tell you next week...

**Travis:** Yes. We're gonna talk about arranging it, we're gonna talk about, like we mentioned, those extras, right? Of like the pickles, the nuts, those kinds of things. We're gonna talk about like, pairings and wine and stuff. And maybe—

**Teresa:** How. To. Eat it.

**Travis:** Yes. Maybe the reason most of you are here.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** How to eat it without looking like a Shrek monster, like me. And that's fine.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And then we'll do an episode all about cheese, and we'll cover the same thing.

**Teresa:** Ugh, I'm so excited! I love meat and cheese!

**Travis:** It's gonna be great. Um, so, that's gonna do it for this week, though. If you're listening to this on Friday, or even Saturday or Sunday, I'm at New York Comic Con right now, as you're listening to it!

**Teresa:** Future Travis is there!

**Travis:** Yes. So check out TravisMcElroy.com. You can see my schedule there. And let's see, what else... we have, uh, new—there's new McElroy Merch, if you go to McElroyMerch.com.

**Teresa:** That usually drops every month, right?

**Travis:** Yes. We always aim for the first of the month. There's going to be some, uh, My Brother, My Brother, and Me's in New York and Philadelphia. Unfortunately, no more Shmanners live shows for the rest of the year. Teresa enters the third trimester, and travel is out of the question. But, we'll be back better and funnier than ever!

**Teresa:** [laughs] Oh, don't make promises you can't keep.

**Travis:** In 2020! Um, go check out all the other amazing shows on MaximumFun.org. What else, Teresa?

**Teresa:** Well, we always say thank you to Brent "Brental Floss" Black for creating our theme music, which is available as a ring tone where those are found. Thank you, also, the Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. And when we call out for questions, that's where we do it. You can find us @ShmannersCast on Twitter.

Also thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover banner of our fan run Facebook group, which you should join. It's called Fanners Shmanners. No! Shmanners Fanners!

**Travis:** [simultaneous] Shmanners Fanners! [laughs]

**Teresa:** [laughs] Listen, it's very cute, okay? I messed it up. But, and that's the place to go if you like to give and get excellent advice from other Shmanners fans. And we are always asking for more topic suggestions. Please submit those to [ShmannersCast@gmail.com](mailto:ShmannersCast@gmail.com). We would love to hear from you. And in fact—

**Travis:** This was a topic suggestion. That's from Abie. Thank you so much, Abie. Abie suggested it, and then we took it, and might be—

**Teresa:** Ran with it.

**Travis:** Might be Abie? A-B-I-E. If you're listening, that's you.

**Teresa:** [laughs] That's you!

**Travis:** We took it, we ran with it, and we're making a whole series out of it, so thank you!

**Teresa:** And then, were there... hm. Oh, we always thank... is that it? I think that—oh! No, that's not it. I want to send out a special thank you to our research assistant, Alex. Without her, my thoughts would be much more random. She is so organized and amazing. Thank you so much, Alex.

**Travis:** Okay, and that's gonna do it for us, so join us again next week.

**Teresa:** No RSVP required!

**Travis:** You've been listening to Shmanners.

**Teresa:** Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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