

Healthy Options for Catered Meetings and Special Events

Healthy eating is balanced eating. Healthy eating does not mean that *everything* you serve has to be low-fat, low-salt, low-sugar and high fiber. Just make sure that you offer *more* choices that are healthy and *fewer* choices that are not.



Healthy foods are beautiful, appetizing, delicious, and satisfying. There are many healthy and tasty options for foods and beverages at special events. Resolve to offer at least some healthier options:

- Fruits and vegetable plates with low fat dips are healthy and beautiful. Grilled and roasted vegetables are so tasty they don't need butter or sauces.
- Baked, roasted or grilled meats and fish are delicious alternatives to fatty and cheese-laden casseroles and lasagna. Avoid breaded, fried, and "stuffed" main dishes. Try a vegetarian entrée.
- Offer smaller portions of rich entrees, appetizers and desserts. This cuts down on calories and fat—and "mini" portions can be fun and attractive.

See the tables below for specific suggestions on healthier choices for breakfasts, lunches, dinners, snacks and receptions.

Suggestions for Healthier Choices

CHOOSE . . .	INSTEAD OF . . .
For Beverages	
water- (plain spring water or flavored carbonated with no sugar), coffees or teas, including decaffeinated and herbal teas 100% fruit or vegetable juices	soda pop fruit flavored drinks
low-fat or skim milk	whole or 2% milk
For Breakfasts	
fresh fruits, dried fruits, unsweetened juices	sweetened canned fruits juices
non-fat or light yogurt	regular yogurt
small bagels - 3-1/2" or smaller	regular bagels
small or mini muffins - 2-1/2" or smaller	regular or large muffins
100% whole grain bagels or muffins low-fat, whole grain and nut granola bars	croissants donuts sweet rolls, pastries
toppings of light trans-free margarine or butter low-fat cream cheese	regular butter margarines with trans fat

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jam or jelly nut butters like almond or peanut butter	regular cream cheese
unsweetened cold cereals instant hot cereals (no sugar added)	sweetened cereals flavored and sweetened instant hot cereals
whole grain waffles and French toast	waffles or French toast made from white bread
lean ham or Canadian bacon vegetarian sausage or bacon substitutes	bacon or sausage
For Lunches or Dinners	
salads with dressings on the side	salads with added dressing
low-fat or fat-free salad dressings	regular salad dressings
soups made with vegetable puree or skim milk	soups made with cream or half and half
pasta, vegetable or tofu salads with low-fat dressing	salads made with mayonnaise or cream dressing
sandwiches on 100% whole grain bread, pita, or wraps	sandwiches on croissants or white bread
lean meats , poultry, fish, tofu low-fat cold cuts (3 g fat/oz) water-packed tuna or salmon	high-fat meats (such as ribs or brisket), poultry with skin high fat cold cuts, salami, pepperoni, sausage, bacon oil-packed tuna or salmon
grilled, baked, or broiled meat, poultry, or fish	fried meats
marinated meats, poultry, or fish	rich cream and cheese sauces or gravies
low-fat cheeses (less than 6 grams of fat per ounce)	regular cheeses
tomato-based sauces	cream, butter or cheese sauces
baked potatoes with low-fat or vegetable toppings	baked potatoes with butter, sour cream, and bacon bits
steamed vegetables	cooked vegetables in cream sauce or butter
100% whole grain breads or rolls	croissants or white rolls
margarine without trans-fatty acids	margarines with trans fat
mustard, catsup, and light mayonnaise	regular mayonnaise or rich sauces
lower fat and calories desserts: fresh fruit, fruit salad, low-fat ice cream, low-fat frozen yogurt, sherbet, sorbet, angel food cake with fruit topping	higher fat and calories desserts: ice cream, cheese cake, pies, cream puffs, large slices of cake, fruit tarts, pie, cobbler
Appetizers or Snacks for Receptions	
fresh vegetables, cut up low-fat dressing, salsa or tofu dip	tempura or deep fat fried vegetables creamy high fat dressings or cheese dips
cut up fresh fruits and vegetables	chips or cookies
low-fat, "lite" popcorn (5 g fat or less/serving)	regular popcorn or buttered popcorn
whole grain crackers (5 g fat or less/serving)	regular crackers
dips made of salsa, low-fat cottage cheese, hummus or low-fat salad dressings	dips made from regular mayonnaise, sour cream, cream cheese or cheese sauce
baked or low-fat chips, pretzels (less than 7 grams of fat per oz)	regular chips
grilled or broiled chicken brochettes without skin	fried chicken, chicken with skin

CHOOSE . . .	INSTEAD OF . . .
miniature fruit or vegetable kebabs	kebabs with chicken liver, bacon, or high fat meats fatty BBQ ribs
miniature meatballs made with lean meat	large meatballs made of high-fat meat, meatballs served in gravy or high-fat sauces
broiled or poached seafood: shrimp, salmon, scallops, oysters, clams	deep fat fried seafood, seafood in high-fat sauces
mushroom caps with low-fat bread-based stuffing	mushrooms with high-fat cheese stuffing or mushrooms marinated in oil
miniature vegetable pizzas with tomato sauce and light cheese	pizza with pepperoni, Italian sausage or other high-fat meats
vegetable sushi rolls or vegetable spring rolls - fresh, not fried	egg rolls or fried spring rolls
small cubes of cheese (3/4" squares or smaller)	large cubes of cheese
raw or roasted, unsalted nuts	salted nuts or sugar-coated nuts like beer nuts

