

A Healthier Serve



The Heart Foundation's Guide to healthier catering





Contents

Page 4	Practical, healthy food and drink choices
Page 4	Breakfast
Page 5	Sandwiches
Page 5	Drinks
Page 5	Cold drinks
Page 5	Hot drinks
Page 6	Hot finger food
Page 7	Cold finger food
Page 7	Dips
Page 7	Fruit and vegetable platters
Page 8	Meals
Page 8	Fish
Page 8	Meat
Page 9	Pasta
Page 9	Vegetarian dishes
Page 9	Pastry alternatives
Page 10	Salads
Page 11	Better barbecuing: Rethink the sausage sizzle
Page 12	Meat choices for the barbecue
Page 12	Fish and seafood
Page 12	Vegetables on the barbecue
Page 12	Vegetarian options
Page 13	Dessert
Page 13	Cheese platters
Page 14	Heart Foundation Tick approved foods
Page 14	Information on fats
Page 15	Creating your own healthy catering policy
Page 15	Preparing for an event
Page 15	Selecting a caterer
Page 15	For more information

This catering guide may be updated after publication. To view the latest version, visit www.heartfoundation.org.au/catering.

Enjoying healthier food and drinks at events

This booklet from the Heart Foundation is a guide to serving healthier food and drinks when catering for a group or organisation. A few simple changes can make a big difference to the food served at your events, proving healthier is still delicious.

Enjoy!





Practical, healthy food and drink choices

Providing healthy food can be easy. A few simple changes can make a big difference. Serve plenty of fruit, vegetables and whole grains and keep saturated fat and salt to a minimum. Some thoughtful preparation and planning will ensure that you have enough food for everyone and that it is tasty and good for you.

The following pages contain practical, healthy food and drink ideas that taste good too.

Breakfast

A healthy breakfast is a wonderful start to the day.

- Serve wholemeal crumpets or English wholegrain or spicy fruit muffins. Avoid sweet cake-style muffins.
- Serve wholegrain cereals, wholemeal flaked or puffed cereals, porridge (rolled oats), wholewheat breakfast biscuits or untoasted muesli.
- Serve wholemeal, savoury or fruit pikelets and scones.
- Fresh fruit is a great choice. Use canned fruit in natural juice if fresh fruit isn't available.
- Serve breakfast with low or reduced fat milk and yoghurt, either plain or fruit-flavoured.
- Use cottage cheese and ricotta cheese, low or reduced fat cheddar cheese or low or reduced fat cheese slices.
- Serve eggs boiled or poached.
- Serve smoothies made with fresh fruit and low or reduced fat yoghurt.

Did you know?

One in five people regularly skip breakfast. People who eat breakfast have improved concentration, and enjoy a healthier weight than people who don't eat it. Breakfast functions may also be more affordable than evening functions.



Sandwiches

When serving sandwiches, offer a variety of breads such as wholemeal, wholegrain, multigrain, soy and linseed, high-fibre white varieties, rye, mountain bread, pita bread, fruit and nut breads, focaccia, bagels and enchilada wraps.

Here are a few examples of great sandwich fillings to get you started:

- roast chicken (skin removed) with mashed avocado mixed with fresh basil
- mashed baked pumpkin, hummus, tomato slices and tabouli or rocket
- ham with roast capsicum and mixed leaves
- sliced roast beef with tabouli and fresh tomato slices
- smoked turkey with cranberry sauce and mixed leaves
- tuna, pesto, semi-dried tomatoes and avocado with mixed leaves.

Go easy on the sauces; avoid adding salt to sandwiches and use Tick approved dairy spreads and margarines instead of butter.

Drinks

Cold drinks

Ensure that water is readily available and promoted.

If alcohol is provided, serve in standard drink size portions (for more information see www.alcohol.gov.au) and offer light alcohol and alcohol-free alternatives such as 100% fruit juice, vegetable juice, mineral water and iced tea.

Always provide food when serving alcohol.

Hot drinks

Offer a variety of coffees and teas, including decaffeinated coffee and herbal teas. Serve with low or reduced fat milk or calcium-enriched soy milk.

Did you know?

Food poisoning is one of the most common illnesses in Australia. The Department of Health and Ageing estimates that every year 5.4 million cases of foodborne illness occur in Australia. For information about keeping your food safe go to www.foodsafetymatters.gov.au.





Hot finger food

There is a temptation to serve less healthy hot finger food, but there are plenty of ways it can be tasty and good for you. Some suggestions are:



- lean meatballs; lean meat kebabs (pork, lamb, beef, skinless chicken, and fish) or vegetable kebabs, served with a dipping sauce such as tomato salsa, chilli and ginger sauce, or low or reduced fat yoghurt-based sauces
- filo pastry parcels containing ricotta cheese with spinach or pumpkin or other vegetable fillings
- chicken pieces baked without the skin
- small baked potatoes with reduced fat toppings such as salad vegetables, lean meats, seafood and low or reduced fat yoghurt, ricotta or grated cheese
- pita bread pizza slices topped with vegetables, lean meat and reduced fat mozzarella cheese
- oven-baked chunky wedges or new potatoes with the skin on, served with salsa.



Cold finger food

Dips

- Be sure to provide vegetable-based dips such as tzatziki and eggplant dip.
- Use reduced fat cream cheese, reduced fat yoghurt, pureed vegetables or pureed beans.
- Add flavour with herbs and spices such as garlic, chilli, lemon juice, basil or coriander.
- Serve with wholemeal or wholegrain crackers, chopped raw vegetables, wholemeal or wholegrain breads, and fresh fruits.
- Visit www.heartfoundation.org.au/catering for healthy dip recipes.

Fruit and vegetable platters

- Include slices of fresh vegetables and fruit in season, dried fruit (e.g. sultanas, apricots, dates, figs, prunes and apple) and plain unsalted nuts* (e.g. almonds, peanuts, walnuts, and cashews).
- Try seasonal fruit kebabs with low or reduced fat yoghurt or fruit sauces (three or more colours look great on skewers).
- Try vegetable kebabs with non-creamy dipping sauces such as tomato salsa, mango chutney, chilli and ginger sauce or satay sauce.

* Some people are highly allergic to nuts. Nuts are not suitable for kids under the age of five.

Quick tip

Look for 'baby' versions of fresh vegetables such as baby corn, baby carrots, grape tomatoes and asparagus. Blanched and cooled, they make great finger food and look fantastic on a platter with dips.





Quick tip

Skip high saturated fat ingredients such as salami, bacon, butter and cream. Instead use ricotta cheese, reduced fat natural yoghurt, a little lemon or lime juice, balsamic vinegar, freshly chopped herbs or pepper to add flavour to dishes.

Meals

Fish

Some types of fish are healthier than others.

- Choose varieties such as Australian or Atlantic salmon, sardines, blue-eye trevalla, blue mackerel, herring, yellow-tail kingfish, silver perch, sea mullet, flathead, canned salmon or tuna, and seafood including oysters, arrow squid, mussels, scallops.
- When using canned fish, choose reduced salt varieties. Fish canned in spring water or oil such as canola, sunflower or olive oil are all suitable.
- Pregnant women and children should restrict some species of fish. For more information on pregnancy and food, visit www.foodstandards.gov.au.

Meat

When cooking meat dishes:

- use lean meat (that is, meat with all visible fat removed)
- remove skin from chicken and other poultry, or use skinless pieces
- better cooking methods are to oven roast, grill or stir-fry meat
- cook with a Heart Foundation Tick approved vegetable oil (e.g. canola, sunflower, soybean or olive) or margarine spread.

A healthy and cost effective way to extend meat in casseroles, stews and meat loaves is to add rolled oats, barley, chick peas, kidney beans or other beans and lentils.

Try serving kebabs, casseroles or stir-fries. Be sure to serve plenty of vegetables with meat dishes.

Pasta

Be sure to add plenty of vegetables to your pasta recipes. Wholemeal pastas, fresh or dried, are especially good in soups and casseroles. For healthy pasta recipes visit www.heartfoundation.org.au/catering.

Vegetarian dishes

When preparing vegetarian dishes, some good ideas are to:

- add beans, peas or lentils to dishes (can be pre-cooked, canned or dried)
- base a variety of dishes on soy foods such as tofu
- serve a variety of cereals and cereal products, wholemeal/ wholegrain bread, buckwheat noodles, millet, barley, polenta, couscous, rice, pasta and rice noodles
- use low or reduced fat dairy or non-dairy (e.g. tofu, soy milk) products to replace full fat milk, cheeses and yoghurts.

Pastry alternatives

It is easy to cut down on the amount of high saturated fat pastry in a meal by using alternatives to pastry.

- Use filo pastry instead of high saturated fat pastries such as short crust, puff or flaky pastry.
- Crepes made with half wholemeal and half white flour and cooked using spray oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean, olive or peanut make great casings for savoury fillings.
- Use mountain breads, hollowed out breadsticks, rolls or buns in place of pastry.
- Use a layer of couscous or rice under meat or vegetable pie fillings.

Quick tip

Use a balsamic marinade to give your vegetables zing! Find recipes at www.heartfoundation.org.au/catering.



Stop allergens

People may be allergic to some of the ingredients in the food you are serving. Common allergens are: eggs, gluten containing cereal, prawns and shellfish, fish, milk, peanuts, soybeans or sesame seeds. It's advisable to know which foods contain these allergens so that people with allergies can be made aware. Visit www.heartfoundation.org.au/catering for more information.



Quick tip

It's so easy to make salad dressings. Visit www.heartfoundation.org.au/catering for some simple vinaigrette and Asian style dressing recipes. Remember – drizzle, don't drench!

Salads

Everyone loves the traditional green, coleslaw and potato salads but it's a great idea to be creative with different ingredients. Add nuts,* seeds, fruit, low or reduced fat cheeses, noodles, crunchy vegetables or tofu to your salads together with different lettuces. Doing this, you can create a variety of great salads.

Serve dressings and sauces on the side so your guests can choose to add them.

Making healthier salad dressings that taste great is simple.

- Try fruit or vegetable purees or juices as a base for dressings.
- Experiment with dressings made with lemon juice, vinegar, herbs and oil such as canola, sunflower, soybean, olive, grape seed, sesame oils.*
- Make dressings using low or reduced fat natural yoghurt.
- Look for commercial mayonnaise that is made from oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean or olive.

* Some people are highly allergic to nuts. Nuts are not suitable for kids under the age of five.





Better barbecuing: Rethink the sausage sizzle

Sausage sizzles are an essential part of Aussie life and with a little imagination you can make them healthier too.

- Add plenty of vegetables such as corn-on-the-cob and mushrooms to the barbecue.
- Look for Heart Foundation Tick approved sausages and burgers.
- Serve interesting salads. Visit www.heartfoundation.org.au/catering for recipes or find one in our cookbooks.
- Serve with a variety of breads and rolls such as wholemeal and multigrain.
- Serve with a variety of low salt chutneys and sauces.
- Serve water, mineral water or 100% fruit and vegetable juices.

Drop the salt

Did you know that high intakes of salt can increase your blood pressure and your risk of cardiovascular disease?

Try keeping the salt shaker off the table and don't add salt to your cooking.





Quick tip

Be sure to provide a variety of salads at barbecues and incorporate vegetables into meals (e.g. meat and vegetable kebabs, vegetables in casseroles or pasta sauces) as well as serving them as a side dish.

Meat choices for the barbecue

- Try different lean meats on the barbecue such as turkey, kangaroo, crocodile or venison.
- Marinating and then basting with the marinade during cooking helps lean meat to stay moist and tender.
- To add interest and flavour to barbecued meat, fish and seafood, baste with a little oil plus mustard, chutney, a low salt Asian sauce, wine and some herbs or spices during cooking.

Fish and seafood

Ideal fish for barbecuing include: Australian or Atlantic salmon, tuna, blue-eye trevalla, sea mullet, flathead and leather jacket. These varieties hold their shape while cooking.

Other great seafood options for the barbecue include: prawns, crabs, scallops, calamari/squid tubes, baby octopus and mussels.

Visit www.heartfoundation.org.au/catering for a fantastic seafood marinade recipe.

Vegetables on the barbecue

Cut 1 cm thick slices of zucchini, capsicum, eggplant and mushroom, coat with a marinade or low salt sauce and cook vegetables directly on the BBQ hotplate or grill. Vegetable kebabs are also simple and look great.

Vegetarian options

Make sure that there are vegetarian options available—people like trying something different and there may be vegetarians at your barbecue. Be sure to keep vegetarian food separate from meat juices and fats. Try:

- chickpea burgers, lentil burgers, vegetable patties, nut* burgers and barbecued vegetables
- marinating slices of firm tofu overnight in garlic, salt-reduced soy sauce, lemon juice and sweet chilli sauce then cooking on the barbecue
- vegetable and haloumi kebabs.

* Some people are highly allergic to nuts. Nuts are not suitable for kids under the age of five.

Dessert

There are many ways to make desserts healthier. Try one of our delicious ideas.

- Serve fruit-based desserts such as fruit mousses, fruit crumbles and baked fruit.
- Add fresh, canned (in natural juice or with no added sugar) or dried fruit to dessert recipes. Leave the skin on fruit where possible.
- Use fruit purees as sauces.
- Try fresh fruit gelato or sorbets.
- Limit the number of desserts that contain high saturated fat ingredients such as chocolate, cream and butter.
- If desserts are made with flour, use a proportion of wholemeal flour.
- Use low or reduced fat dairy or non-dairy products to replace full fat dairy desserts.
- Try whipping ricotta cheese with a little honey and vanilla to replace whipped cream.
- Look for chocolate desserts that are made with cocoa powder rather than chocolate.

Cheese platters

Because cheese can be high in saturated fat, add a variety of other healthy foods to the platter. Include:

- fresh and dried fruit, and plain unsalted nuts*
- reduced fat hard cheeses
- wholemeal or wholegrain crackers such as water crackers, reduced salt crispbreads and flatbreads.

Serve cheeses such as brie, camembert and edam in small amounts.

* Some people are highly allergic to nuts. Nuts are not suitable for kids under the age of five.





Heart Foundation Tick approved foods

Shopping with the Heart Foundation Tick is the easiest way to give your organisation's event a health makeover.

Because the Tick is on more than 1,200 foods in the supermarket, there's probably a Tick alternative to the foods you already use.

Tick approved products indicate a healthier choice within a food category. And because we understand that making changes to your organisation's eating patterns is not that easy, we have Tick choices available on some 'occasional' foods too, to help make the change easier.

Before being permitted to use the Tick, foods must meet strict nutrition and labelling standards. The Heart Foundation tests for combinations of saturated fat, trans fat, salt, fibre and kilojoules. Regular random testing ensures that foods continue to meet the strict standards.

Just reach for the Tick.

You can download the Tick shopping list from www.heartfoundation.org.au/Healthy_Living/Eating_and_Drinking/The_Tick/In_the_Supermarket.



Information on fats

The 3 Step Guide from the Heart Foundation tells food outlets and caterers how to reduce the levels of unhealthy saturated and trans fats from their menus. To view the most current version of this guide, or for further support, please visit http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/Professional_Information/Tick.htm.

Creating your own healthy catering policy

If you are part of an organisation that provides food regularly, you might like to create your own healthy catering policy. It is a good way to make healthy food choices easier at your functions and events. For advice on developing a catering or nutrition policy visit www.heartfoundation.org.au/catering.

Preparing for an event

Selecting a caterer

If you're selecting a caterer, discuss healthy options when planning your menu together. If the menu doesn't contain healthy options, request changes based on the practical tips contained in this booklet.

For more information

You can find out more about healthy eating and healthy cooking by calling the Heart Foundation on 1300 36 27 87, emailing heartline@heartfoundation.org.au or visiting www.heartfoundation.org.au.

The Heart Foundation has a number of cookbooks full of tasty, healthy and easy-to-make recipes. The latest addition to the Heart Foundation's cookbook family is *The New Classic Cookbook* based on the popular *Heart Foundation Cookbook*. It contains 148 easy-to-prepare healthy recipes.

You can also contact the Heart Foundation for general information on heart health and physical activity.

Feedback

Have you used *A Healthier Serve* to plan the food served at an event? We would love to hear your feedback. Tell us by visiting www.heartfoundation.org.au/catering.





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