

- Choose foods that will create a balanced plate, with half the plate comprised of fruits and vegetables, a quarter of the plate protein, and a quarter of the plate grains (preferably whole grains). For more information, see [Canada's Food Guide](#).
- Make water the drink of choice.
 - Tip: Make it fun by adding slices of fruit, herbs, or even cucumbers.
- For buffet-style events, place vegetables as the first items.
 - Tip: For buffet-style and grab-and-go events, select a smaller plate size to promote mindful eating and reduce food waste.
- For grab-and-go events, ensure healthy options are just as accessible in this format.
 - Tip: Cutting up fruits and vegetables into bite sized pieces can increase their appeal.
 - Tip: Offer smaller portions (e.g. small sandwiches) to encourage attendees to consume a variety of foods.
 - Tip: Serve bite-size dessert portions and include fruit and whole grain options (e.g. oatmeal raisin cookies, mini yogurt parfaits, or bite-sized black bean brownies).



- Common plant proteins include beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, and tempeh.
- Plant proteins are equally as nutritious as animal protein, more cost-efficient, and gentler on the environment, making them great staples for events.
 - Tip: Look for legumes, including beans and lentils, when selecting meals. They can easily be incorporated into soups, chili, and salads. They also can be used to create burger patties or substituted for meat in many main courses.
- Ensure information is gathered on dietary restrictions prior to event. This will ensure that all attendees have a suitable meal.
- When possible, make your menu suitable for common dietary restrictions.
 - Example: Rather than a cream of broccoli soup, make a vegetable soup to accommodate potential lactose-free and vegan individuals.
 - Tip: Select gluten-free grains such as quinoa, buckwheat, or rice to accommodate gluten-sensitive individuals.

- When possible, create dishes that include seasonal items. This will also reduce food cost, as seasonal items typically are less expensive to source.
- When possible, purchase locally grown food.
- Consider ways to limit plastic packaging and disposables by requesting bulk service with washable plates and cutlery or compostable options.
- Select foods that are steamed to preserve nutritional value.
- Have dressings and sauces served on the side and include lower fat options like yogurt-based dips.
 - Tip: Read nutrition labels and include foods with less sodium and saturated fat. Less than 5% daily value means a food item is low in that nutrient. 20% or greater daily value means a food item is high in that nutrient.

- Explore recipes assembled by [Dietitians of Canada](#).



- Sell tickets to your event so that the number of guests is known in advance. This will help to reduce overproduction of food.
- If possible, seek advice from individuals who have executed a similar event. They may have insight on appropriate food quantities to prepare.
- Ensure that there is a plan in place for possible meal event leftovers. Depending on the event, leftover options may include donating food or freezing it for a later time.
- See our [Quick Guide to Food Surplus](#) to learn more.

Quick Guide created with the support of McGill's [School of Human Nutrition](#).