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**Healthy Sydney
University**

Healthier choices catering guidelines



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[sydney.edu.au/
healthy-sydney-university](http://sydney.edu.au/healthy-sydney-university)
+61 2 9036 7891

Healthy Sydney University

Healthier choices catering guidelines

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Healthy Sydney University

Healthier choices catering guidelines

The University of Sydney healthier choices catering guidelines have been developed by the Healthy Sydney University ‘Eat Better’ working group in line with evidence-based state and federal government recommendations, including the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

The purpose of the guidelines is to assist caterers, staff and students at the University of Sydney choose and serve healthier food and beverages at their events.

The guidelines comprise of

- Checklist for caterers (p.4)
- Suggested menu items (p.8)
- Tips for event organisers (p.12)

Catering refers to all foods and drinks provided at functions and events such as training courses, meetings, workshops, seminars, conferences, forums, or classes.

Special celebratory events such as end of year events, reunions, anniversaries, weddings, graduations, or awards nights are not the focus of the guidelines.

Catering may be provided by a caterer that is internal or external to the University, or by other people such as staff or students.

The University’s Division of Events and Venue Management (CIS) have a list of pre-qualified catering companies who were consulted during the development of these guidelines.

You may view the full list of [pre-qualified event suppliers here](#).



Checklist for caterers

Foods and ingredients

At least 80% of the menu provides a variety of everyday or 'core' foods in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

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This includes vegetables, fruit, wholegrain or higher-fibre breads or cereals ($\geq 5\text{g}$ dietary fibre per 100g), lean protein (meats, poultry, fish, tofu, legumes, eggs, nuts or seeds), and low- or reduced-fat dairy (such as yoghurt or milk).

If breads or cereal grain foods are on the menu, at least one wholegrain or higher-fibre (i.e. $\geq 5\text{g}$ dietary fibre per 100g) variety is available.

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For example:

- Breads, rolls, crisp breads, crackers, flatbreads or wraps based on mixed grain, multigrain, wholegrain, wholemeal, fibre-increased white, soy and linseed or rye flours.
- Bakery items such as plain or fruit-based pikelets, cakes, muffins, pancakes or scones made using higher-fibre flours such as wholemeal, spelt, rye, chickpea or soya, or higher fibre ingredients added such as wheat bran or oats.
- Other cereal grain products such as couscous, brown rice, barley, quinoa, chia, cracked wheat, wheat or buckwheat noodles, or pasta.
- Breakfast cereals such as untoasted oats or muesli, wheat biscuits, wholegrain or bran cereal puffs or flakes.

If dairy foods (or alternatives such as lactose-free or soy, if required) are on the menu, low- or reduced-fat varieties are available.

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For example:

- Plain or flavoured yoghurts ($< 2\text{g}$ fat per 100mls).
- Plain milks ($< 2\text{g}$ fat per 100mls), although full-fat varieties may be provided for service with tea or coffee.

All main meal items include a source of lean protein.

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Appropriate proteins include lean meat, poultry or fish, or vegetarian alternatives such as tofu, legumes (e.g. chickpeas or lentils), eggs, nuts or seeds.

Healthier spreads and oils are used, and only sparingly.

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For spreads, you should be able to see the bread through the spread. Appropriate spread bases and oils for cooking or dressings include: canola, olive, sunflower, cottonseed, grapeseed, linseed, flaxseed, macadamia, peanut, rice bran, sesame, safflower, soybean or vegetable oils. Appropriate spreads include nut spreads (e.g. tahini), avocado or hummus.

If sweet items are on the menu, include at least three different fresh seasonal fruits (as whole pieces or cut-up).

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If savoury items are on the menu, these include at least three different vegetables in a salad or cooked (only cook vegetables until just tender to retain the most nutrients).

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Recipes contain no or minimal added salt, using herbs or spices instead to add flavour.

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Any salt used is iodised. For packaged foods, 'no added salt', 'low salt' or 'salt reduced' options are used.

Less than 20% of the menu offers occasional or 'discretionary' foods.

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These foods include:

- Confectionery, such as chocolates, lollies, liquorice, jelly beans, fruit leathers, and nut or seed and fruit products with added fats or sugars (including chocolate, carob or yoghurt coated dried fruits or nuts).
- Higher fat and processed meats, such as meat with visible fat intact or marbling, chicken with skin, battered fish, sausages and frankfurts (unless reduced-fat and no added salt), and deli meats such as salami or devon.
- Butter, butter blends, ghee, lard, copha, palm oil, coconut oil, meatdrippings and regular fat varieties of coconut creams and milks, creams and sour creams (>20g fat per 100g), mayonnaise and cream-based dressings.

If occasional or 'discretionary' foods are served, these foods should be in portion-controlled sizes.

For example:

- Sweet bakery items with added fats and sugars are small (less than 40g per portion). This includes cakes, banana bread or loaf, scrolls, iced buns, slices, tarts, puddings, muffins, pastries, danishes, pies, crumbles, doughnuts, scones, sweet biscuits, sweet breads, iced buns, or cereal or muesli bars.
 - Savoury canapes or appetisers with added fats are less than 30g per portion for pull-aparts, twists, garlic breads, pies, pasties, pastries, buttered popcorn, chips, crisps or crackers such as Jatz; or less than 60g per portion for quiches, pies, pasties or mini pizzas.
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Cooking methods

Healthier cooking methods are used. These include: grilling, stir-frying, steaming, microwaving, oven baking, boiling, poaching, dry-frying or barbequing. Cooking methods should use very little oil or fat for cooking. Deep frying is limited or not available.

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Special dietary needs

Special dietary needs and allergies are catered for where possible. This includes appropriate food labelling and handling, particularly regarding seafood, dairy, wheat and nut products. For more information on managing allergens in food service:

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- www.allergyfacts.org.au/
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At least one vegetarian option is provided. Vegetarian main meal items include an alternative protein source such as tofu, legumes (e.g. chickpeas or lentils), eggs, nuts or seeds.

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Beverages

Plain water is provided. This may include tap, spring, or still or sparkling mineral water. Other beverages that may be provided include herbal, green or black teas and caffeinated and decaffeinated coffee. Sugar or other sweetener may be provided. Milks or alternative non-dairy milks such as lactose-free or soy should contain at least 3g protein and 120mg calcium per 100mls.

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Beverages other than water (still or sparkling) are all 250ml or less per portion. This includes:

- 'Diet' (artificially sweetened) drinks
- 97-100% fruit or vegetable juices
- Fruit smoothies made with reduced-fat milks or yoghurts

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Sugar-sweetened drinks are limited or not available. These include soft drinks, iced teas, sports drinks, flavoured milks and waters, cordials, juices with less than 97% fruit or vegetable content, milkshakes or energy drinks.

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Alcohol service is limited or not available. If alcohol is available, it must be served in accordance with the University's policies and regulations as well as NSW law. The most recent evidence-based Australian guidelines on alcohol recommend that healthy men and women should not drink more than 2 standard drinks on any day:

- www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-topics/alcohol-guidelines

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Sustainability

Use small plates, bowls, glasses and cups to minimise both material and consumer food waste. This also assists in meeting serving size recommendations and consumer portion control and satiety, while allowing seconds if desired).

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Serve dressings, sauces, condiments and gravies are separately on the side.

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Procure seasonal fruit and vegetable produce – ideally from local suppliers to reduce food miles.

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Procure sustainable seafood that is graded as a 'better choice' or 'eat less' based on the fishing/farming methods:

- www.sustainableseafood.org.au

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Limit use of disposable ware and packaged food or beverage products, or source recyclable alternatives.

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Food safety

Food service and catering complies with safe food practices including food labelling and standards as per the relevant Australian guidelines:

- www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/
- www.foodstandards.gov.au/

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Checklist for catering



Healthier choices catering guidelines

Suggested menu items

Breakfast

- Wholegrain cereals: whole wheat cereal flakes, untoasted muesli or porridge (rolled oats).
- Serving suggestions: Reduced fat milk and fresh sliced fruits or reduced-fat yoghurt with berry puree or stewed fruits.
- Toasted breads, rolls or wraps: mixed grain, multigrain, wholegrain, wholemeal, fibre-increased white, soy and linseed or rye.
- Serving suggestions: Eggs (boiled, poached, scrambled or as an omelette with reduced-fat milk), smoked salmon slices, mashed beans with feta and herbs, grilled vegetables (drained of oil) and seasonal herbs. Provide polyunsaturated or monounsaturated margarines and tomato relish on the side.
- Mini frittatas or fritters with roast vegetables (mushroom, zucchini, red onion) and feta or lean ham.
- English muffins (wholegrain or spicy fruit), fruit loaf (raisin toast), pikelets, pancakes or scones (made using wholemeal flour) and reduced-fat milks (plain or with added fruit pieces).
- Serving suggestions: Serve whipped ricotta cheese and fresh puréed berries or stewed fruit on the side.
- Reduced-fat yoghurts: plain or flavoured, low-fat or no-fat varieties.
- Fruit smoothies made from fresh fruits and reduced-fat milks or yoghurts
- Serving suggestion: Serve in small glasses ≤250mls per serving.

Morning/afternoon tea

Savoury selections

- Miniature pancakes, pikelets, patties, crepes or frittatas made with higher-fibre flours such as wholemeal, chickpea/soya or rye, eggs and vegetables (grated zucchini, diced capsicum and roasted corn) and mixed herbs.
- Serving suggestions: Serve alone or top with reduced-fat sour cream and kidney bean puree or mashed avocado.
- Dip platter with wholemeal or wholegrain crackers, crisp breads, toasted flatbreads or sliced baguette and raw vegetables including carrot, celery, cucumber sticks, snow peas, or cherry tomatoes or roasted/grilled vegetables and olives (both drained of oil).
- Serving suggestions: Top with diced tomato, basil with balsamic vinegar, smoked salmon with reduced-fat cream cheese, or vegetable-based spreads, salsas or relishes such as tomato, capsicum or bean.

Sweet selections

- Fresh seasonal fruits – whole pieces, cut up onto a platter, or served on kebab sticks.
- Serving suggestion(s): Provide low-fat vanilla yoghurt and berry puree on the side for dipping.
- Sweet muffins, friands, scones or loaves made with higher-fibre flours such as wholemeal, spelt or rye, with fruits added for sweetness, reduced fat milks or yoghurts, with little fats
- Serving suggestion(s): Provide whipped ricotta cheese, and fruit purée as spreads on the side



Lunch

Sandwiches or wraps made using mixed grain, multigrain, wholegrain, wholemeal, fibre-increased white, soy and linseed or rye breads, bread rolls, baguettes, flatbreads, wraps or pita pockets. Cut wraps and sandwiches into quarters to help customers avoid over eating and to minimise wastage.

Suggested fillings

- Roast chicken (skin removed) with mashed avocado, cherry tomato and fresh basil.
- Tandoori chicken breast with spring onion and rocket.
- Lean ham with fresh tomato slices, reduced-fat cheddar slices and mixed leaves.
- Sliced lean roast beef with mustard, tomato chutney and rocket.
- Smoked turkey with reduced-fat Swiss cheese slices, cranberry sauce and mixed leaves.
- Tuna, lemon thyme pesto, with grated carrot and mixed leaves.
- Smoked salmon, reduced-fat cream cheese, dill or chives and rocket.

- (Vegetarian) mashed pumpkin and cannellini bean with salad sprouts and ricotta with thyme or sage mash.
- (Vegetarian) falafel with mixed salad leaves, roast eggplant and hummus with feta mash.
- (Vegetarian) roast capsicum and zucchini with hummus, baby spinach and beetroot chutney.
- (Vegetarian) mashed boiled egg with red onion and cos lettuce.

Tips: Use oil spray when grilling or roasting vegetables and use condiments sparingly. If using tinned fish choose those in spring water, brine or oil such as canola, sunflower or olive oil and drain before use.

Fresh salads made with lean meats, poultry, fish or vegetarian alternatives such as legumes, toasted nuts or marinated tofu. Suggested mixes include:

- Warm chicken salad with citrus fruits.
- Grilled calamari and tossed garden salad with lime and sweet chilli dressing.



- Lean lamb slices with chick peas, steamed pumpkin, cherry tomatoes, baby spinach and couscous.
- Lean beef, broccoli, snow peas, sesame seeds with ginger and lime.
- (Vegetarian) rice noodle, Asian greens and roasted cashew nuts.
- (Vegetarian) lentil, steamed pumpkin, green beans with balsamic glaze.
- (Vegetarian) minted pea and potato salad with reduced-fat plain yoghurt and chive dressing.
- (Vegetarian) rocket salad with pear, spring onion and roasted walnuts with cider vinegar and honey dressing.
- Sushi or rice paper rolls filled with lean meats, egg or seafood with a variety of raw vegetable fillings. Serving suggestions: Salt-reduced soy or fish sauce with honey and lime, salt-reduced sweet chilli sauce, fresh coriander, shallots, grated carrot and toasted sesame seeds.
- (Vegetarian) baked sweet potato wedges with roasted eggplant and reduced-fat sour cream dip.
- (Vegetarian) filo pastry parcels containing lentil, ricotta cheese, spinach or pumpkin and basil.
- (Vegetarian) mini burritos with kidney bean and tomato salsa, avocado, cucumber and roasted corn kernels.

Evening – canapés and appetisers

- Lean beef meatballs with tomato salsa.
- Grilled marinated skewers with lean meat (pork, lamb, beef), skinless chicken or prawns with vegetables such as zucchini, onion, capsicum.
- Mini pizzas with lean meats, chicken or seafood, minimal cheese and vegetable based toppings.
- (Vegetarian) lentil patties or falafels (grilled or cooked in minimal oil) with reduced-fat Greek yoghurt dipping sauce.
- (Vegetarian) stuffed vegetables such as mushrooms stuffed with pine nut pesto, feta and tomato.

Dinner

Entrée selections

- 50g poached white Australian fish in low-salt soy broth with Asian greens and ¼ cup cooked buckwheat noodles.
- 1 cup minestrone soup made with lean bacon pieces, vegetables and mixed legumes, served with 40g piece multigrain bread with 1 teaspoon drizzled olive oil.
- 1 cup lentil dahl with 100mls reduced-fat Greek yogurt fresh diced cucumber and coriander.

Main selections

- 65g seared beef cheek with steamed green beans, herbed sweet potato mash and red wine sauce (without added salt).
- 80g cooked stir-fry with chicken breast slices with broccoli, carrot, salt-reduced soy sauce and topped with toasted sesame seeds.
- Paella made with 100g cooked mixed seafood in a tomato based vegetable sauce with ½ cup cooked long-grain white rice.
- 100g cooked lightly fried Atlantic salmon with mixed salad and ½ cup cooked quinoa.
- (Vegetarian) Roasted vegetable lasagne made with 120g ricotta cheese and ½ cup cooked chickpeas.
- (Vegetarian) 170g salt and pepper tofu fried in small amount canola oil served with colourful Asian coleslaw.

Desserts

- Summer pudding made with raisin loaf and vanilla and served with 1 tablespoon of reduced-fat cream.
- 150g fresh fruit salad with 100mls reduced-fat vanilla bean yoghurt.
- Fruit crumble with 75g stewed fruit and ¼ cup baked oat topping, served with 100ml reduced-fat yoghurt (100mls).
- 40g chocolate mousse made with reduced-fat cream served with berry puree.

Barbeques

- Beef, lamb or pork trimmed of all visible fat, hamburger patties made with lean minces or low-fat sausages.
- Skinless chicken or turkey breast.
- Fish fillets, calamari or prawns.
- (Vegetarian) Burger patties made from lentils or chickpeas.
- (Vegetarian) Skewers with marinated tofu or haloumi, and vegetables.
- Lime and chilli chicken fillets.
- Peppered beef and mushroom kebabs.
- Soy and ginger salmon.
- Citrus stuffed grilled trout.
- Grilled chicken fajitas.
- Chicken and dried apricot kebabs.
- Barbecued fish kebabs with onion and peppers.
- Indian spiced beef kebabs with low-fat yoghurt dressing.
- Barbecued pork medallions with apple or cranberry sauce.

Serving suggestions

Provide plenty of vegetables cooked without oil, such as corn on-the-cob, mushrooms, tomato halves, capsicum and zucchini slices. Provide higher-fibre mixed grain, multigrain, wholegrain, wholemeal, fibre-increased white, soy and linseed or rye bread rolls. Provide on the side salt-reduced sauces and healthier spreads such as margarines based on canola, sunflower or olive oils, hummus or avocado.

Pregnant women and those planning pregnancy should avoid certain types of fish – see Food Standards Australia New Zealand for more information

- www.foodstandards.gov.au/

Note: All portion sizes are per person.

Tips for event organisers

The top five for healthier and more sustainable catering

Fresh is best

Look for dishes with lots of fresh vegetables and fruit.

Good things come in small packages

Offer smaller serving sizes and avoid over-catering.

You get a whole lot more from wholegrains

Make them your preferred choice.

Hydrate and feel great

Still or sparkling, water is always the best choice.

If it's sweet, it's a treat

Why not go with fresh fruit instead?

What should I order or serve?

Focus on ordering and serving foods we should be eating most. These foods are everyday foods and make up the core of a healthy diet: vegetables, fruit, wholegrain breads and cereals, lean protein (including nuts and legumes) and low-fat or reduced-fat dairy products.

Vegetables and fruit

Choose dishes with a variety of different vegetables. Fresh fruit is a great option for breakfasts, morning or afternoon teas.

Grains

Pick wholegrain and brown breads and cereals for rolls, wraps, rice, noodles, untoasted oats and muesli.

Protein

Choose lean cuts of meat (beef, chicken, fish), or non-meat alternatives such as tofu, legumes, eggs, nuts and seeds.

Dairy

Use or request low and reduced fat varieties of dairy foods, including fortified dairy alternatives.

Beverages

Go for plain water: tap or sparkling, with slices of fresh lemon, limes and some mint. Other beverage options include tea, coffee, plain milks, 97-100% fruit and vegetable juice and reduced fat smoothies.

Spreads and oils

Use or request healthier spreads and oils, such as canola, olive and sunflower oils, and tahini or hummus.

Cooking methods

Use or request healthier cooking methods such as grilling, steaming, oven baking, poaching or stir frying.

Salt

Use or request minimal salt in foods – herbs and spices can be used instead.

Vegetarian

Include vegetarian options with items including tofu, legumes (eg. Chickpeas or lentils), eggs, nuts or seeds.

Other dietary needs

Make sure you cater for any other dietary needs such as seafood, dairy, or wheat intolerances and allergies.

What should I avoid ordering or serving?

Rethink ordering and serving foods that are 'discretionary' food items. These foods are occasional foods and not necessary as part of a healthy and balanced diet, as they provide little or no nutrients and have large amounts of saturated fat, salt and/or sugar.

If you are ordering some of these items, ensure the serving size is small and offer plenty of healthier options so your event attendees have choice.

Confectionary

This includes chocolates, lollies, liquorice, jelly beans, fruit leathers and nut or seed and fruit products with added fats or sugars such as chocolate coated fruits or nuts.

Sugary drinks

This includes soft drinks, iced teas, sports drinks, flavoured milks and waters, cordials, juices with less than 97% fruit or vegetable content, milkshakes or energy drinks.

Alcohol

Limit the serving of alcohol. If alcohol is available, it must be served in accordance with the University's policies and regulations as well as NSW law. The most recent evidence-based Australian guidelines on alcohol recommend that healthy men and women should not drink more than 2 standard drinks on any day:

- www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-topics/alcohol-guidelines

Sweet items

These include items such as cakes, banana bread or loaf, scrolls, slices, tarts, muffins, pastries or danishes. If necessary, cut (or ask caterers to cut) them up into smaller portions before service.

Savoury items

These include pull-aparts, twists, garlic breads, pies, pastries, mini pizzas and quiches. If necessary, cut (or ask caterers to cut) them up into smaller portions before service.

Higher fat and processed meats

These include fatty meats, chicken with skin, bacon, battered fish, sausages and frankfurts (unless reduced-fat and no added salt), and deli meats such as salami or devon.

Butter and high fat spreads

Limit (or ask caterers to limit) the use of high saturated fat ingredients in recipes such as butter, palm oil, coconut oil, and regular fat varieties of coconut creams and milks, creams and sour creams, mayonnaise and cream-based dressings.



References

Development of the healthier choices catering guidelines was informed by the following state and federal government and non-government organisation resources.

- National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian Dietary Guidelines – providing the scientific evidence for healthier Australian diets. NHMRC; 2013.
- NSW Department of Health. Healthier Food and Drinks Guide.
- National Heart Foundation. Healthy Workplace Catering Policy – Checklist.
- National Heart Foundation. A Healthier Serve: The Heart Foundation’s Guide to Healthier Catering.
- Queensland Government. Information Sheet – Healthy Choice Catering.
- Nutrition Promotion Unit, Queensland Health. Catering for the Environment: How to Create an Environmentally Friendly Event.
- South Australian Government. Healthy Catering Ideas for Meetings, Functions and Events.
- Victorian Government. Healthy Choices: Healthy Eating and Catering Guide for Workplaces.
- Northern Territory Government Department of Health and Families: Catering Policy for ‘One-off’ Events.
- Government of Western Australia. Healthier Catering: A Guide to Assist Workplaces.
- Government of Western Australia. A Guide to Ordering Healthier Food and Drink from External Caterers.
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand. AUSNUT 2011-13 Food Nutrient Database. Food Standards Australia New Zealand. Food Standards Code.

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Correspondence on these guidelines and other related documents should be directed to:

Healthy Sydney University
Level 6 Charles Perkins Centre Building D17
Johns Hopkins Drive
The University of Sydney NSW 2006

+61 2 9036 7891
sydney.edu.au/healthy-sydney-university
healthy.uni@sydney.edu.au