

Making Buffets Healthy

Eating at buffets while trying to follow a healthy diet can be tricky. Here are several tips to help you eat healthy while still enjoying a buffet.

Tips for eating healthy at buffets

The general rules of eating out apply to all restaurants; however, there are several rules that are specific to buffets and all-you-can-eat restaurants.

- **Knowledge is power.** Before you put any food on your plate, review all the options. Doing so allows you to know exactly what sections to avoid, and where the foods you want are located. This also helps you avoid putting too much food on your plate.
- **Think small.** Get a small plate for your food. By selecting the smallest available place, you limit the amount of food you can put on it.
- **Divide and conquer.** Even though you are using a small place, mentally divide the plate into fourths. Then practice “plating” portion control with half the plate for fruits and vegetables, and the remaining half split evenly between grains and proteins. This technique will help you eat the appropriate portion sizes.
- **Three’s company.** Use three plates. This isn’t so you can get three helpings of the main entrées. The three plates will be used for different parts of the meal. One for salad, one for the main course, and the last for dessert. Make sure all three plates are small to avoid overeating.
- **Multiple trips.** Instead of getting all your food at one time, make several trips. By doing this, you are not only getting up and burning more calories, you are also allowing yourself the opportunity to register whether you feel full.
- **Fruity goodness.** Pick fruit for your dessert instead of pastries. Instead of the sugary, calorie-packed pastries for dessert, opt for a small portion of frozen yogurt with lots of fresh fruit. This provides a tasty and refreshing dessert without going overboard on calories.
- **Happy tummy, not happy plate.** Don’t be afraid to leave food on your plate. Eat only what you want and stop when you are full. By listening to your body, you will avoid the extra calories that come with overeating.

Remember these tips and techniques the next time you eat at a buffet. If you start to feel overwhelmed, just remember you’re worth it! Just because buffets are all-you-can-eat, it doesn’t mean you have to!

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