

CHOOSING HEALTHY FOODS AT THE BUFFET TABLE

Tips for African Americans with Diabetes



Buffets can be a fun way to share meals with family and friends. Whether at a potluck party or a restaurant, buffets offer lots of tasty dishes you may not eat every day. However, they also can be challenging, especially if you have diabetes. How can you stay healthy and still enjoy your favorite dishes? You can do it by planning ahead, choosing wisely, and watching how much you eat. So, grab your plate and head for the buffet.

WHEN YOU GO



menu

- **Plan ahead.** Before you go, think about the foods that might be served on the buffet. Decide which foods will help keep your blood sugar under control and which foods you want to avoid.
- **Check out all that's offered on the buffet.** Before you serve yourself, look at all the options first, then choose one or two favorite treats along with healthier items to round out your meal.
- **Watch your portions.** Many of your favorite foods may have a lot of fat, sugar, or salt. Take very small portions of deep-fried foods, fatty foods like bacon or pork, cheesy foods, and desserts.
- **Come prepared.** If possible, bring a low-fat main dish so you'll have something healthy to eat. Let people know what ingredients you used. This will be helpful for your friends and family members who are also trying to watch what they eat.

VEGETABLE TIPS



- **Fill half of a 10-inch plate** (the size of a regular dinner or paper plate) **with colorful, non-starchy vegetables**, such as broccoli, bell peppers, green beans, collard greens, turnip or mustard greens, carrots, cabbage, eggplant, and spinach.
- **Choose fresh or steamed vegetables** that are light on salad dressing, cheese, or cream. If you can, make your own dressing for salads with a little olive oil and vinegar.
- **Watch out for vegetable dishes loaded with butter and cheese**, like casseroles and vegetables with sauce.
- **Take just a taste of vegetable dishes cooked with fats** like lard or high-fat meats such as ham hocks or pork belly.



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GRAINS AND STARCHES

- Take only as much grain (like rice or bread) or starchy vegetables (like potatoes, sweet potatoes, or green peas) to **fill ¼ of your plate.**
- **Choose high-fiber grains** like steamed brown rice, whole wheat bread, and cornbread.
- Serve yourself brown rice and whole grain breads. **Avoid using butter or margarine on bread, rice, and other grains and starches.**
- **Take small portions or avoid starches with heavy sauces** like macaroni and cheese and potato salad.



PROTEIN TIPS

- Take 2–5 ounces of protein such as chicken or other lean meat, fish, or bean dishes (like black-eyed peas); enough to **fill ¼ of your plate.**
- **Pick dishes with baked or grilled lean meat** (like chicken without the skin or beef with the fat cut off), **fish, or shrimp.**
- **Try turkey burgers**, and top off your burgers, hot dogs, and sandwiches with **fresh veggies and mustard** rather than mayonnaise and cheese.
- If you can, **trim the skin and fat** off any meat you eat.
- Take just a taste of meats that are breaded, fried, or cooked with a lot of fat or heavy sauces, like fried chicken, chicken wings, sweet and sour chicken, and braised pork or beef.
- **Choose protein-rich bean dishes.** Baked beans and black-eyed peas are good choices. But take only small amounts of bean dishes cooked with added sugar and fat.



SWEET TIPS

- Fruit is an excellent source of fiber, vitamins, and minerals. **Choose fresh, canned, or frozen fruits with no added sugar.** Try pears, apples, strawberries, or melons, or a fruit salad without sugar or whipped cream.
- Try to **have only a small serving** of foods that are high in sugar and/or fat, like cookies, cake, cobblers, or pies. Or skip the sweets altogether.



DRINK TIPS

- **Drink water, unsweetened coffee or brewed tea, or other sugar-free beverages.**
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, limit drinking to no more than one a day for women and two a day for men. Always drink alcohol with food, and never on an empty stomach.



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For more information call 1-800 CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).

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