

With a bit of planning you can offer your barbecue favourites while promoting healthy eating.

Barbecues are a great way for people to get together and socialise, particularly during the warmer months. However, barbecue foods can often be high in saturated fat and salt, and not offer enough salad and vegetables.

Try some of the tips below to provide some barbecue favourites, while promoting healthy eating. The *Hosting a healthy barbecue: Sample menu and event plan*¹ will assist you to plan the finer details of your event.

Tips for providing healthy barbecue foods

- Avoid over catering on meat - offer only one piece of lean meat or a burger patty (or vegetarian equivalent) per person.
- Choose lean cuts of meat. Refer to the table on the following page for ideas.
- Provide a range of seasonal salads and vegetables.
- Offer reduced salt varieties of sauces (tomato, BBQ, sweet chilli) and let people add the sauce themselves.
- Offer unbuttered wholemeal or wholegrain bread.
- Ask people to indicate any special dietary requirements one week in advance of the event. This will help your budgeting, shopping and avoid wastage.
- If asking people to bring a plate of food, provide a list of suggested salads and/or fruit platters on a notice board and ask people to choose an option each. This will ensure a variety of healthy dishes are offered.

Healthier alternatives to traditional barbecue ingredients

Swap this.....	For this.....
Meats	
Regular sausages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced fat and reduced salt sausages ● Vegetarian sausages <p>Tip: Cut some large sausages in half to provide smaller portions for different appetites.</p>
Regular commercial burgers and patties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lean or extra lean burger patties ● Vegetable burgers <p>Tip: Making your burger patties can be cheaper and healthier than store bought patties. Try our healthier recipes: <i>Chicken burger, lentil burger, lean beef burger</i>.</p>
Meat kebabs in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lean meat kebabs marinated in lemon juice, olive oil, garlic and fresh herbs.

¹ *Hosting a healthy barbecue: Sample menu and event plan*, Healthy Eating Advisory Service, Department of Health and Human Services, State Government of Victoria, 2014, www.heas.health.vic.gov.au

Swap this.....	For this.....
cream or oil-based sauces/ marinades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meat and vegetable kebabs <p>Tip: Kebabs are easy to make. Alternate between a piece of lean meat or seafood and a variety of vegetables – this will also lower the cost. Try our healthier recipes: Marinade for lean meats, prawn and vegetable kebabs</p>
Breads and potatoes	
White breads and rolls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wholemeal or wholegrain varieties of breads, rolls, pita bread or mountain bread. <p>Tip: Avoid using spreads on bread. If you must, offer olive or canola oil based margarine for people to spread themselves.</p>
Creamy potato salads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Home-made potato salad using natural yoghurt and/or reduced fat mayonnaise. ● Jacket potatoes: Wrap potatoes in foil and cook on the grill for 45–60 mins. <p>Tip: Try our healthier recipe: Creamy potato salad</p>
Side dishes and sauces	
Creamy coleslaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Home-made coleslaw using natural yoghurt and/or reduced fat mayonnaise. ● Grilled vegetables. Try eggplant, zucchini, pumpkin, capsicum and/or field mushrooms sprinkled with garlic, herbs and pepper. ● Corn cobs ● Tabouli or Greek salad (available pre-made through most delis') <p>Tip: Try our healthier recipe: Crunchy coleslaw</p>
Potato crisps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Air popped popcorn (plain or flavoured) ● Oven baked pita bread served with a healthy dip
Cream, cheese or 'chunky' nut-based dips (e.g. French onion, smoked salmon, pesto dips)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced fat yoghurt and/or vegetable-based dips (e.g. reduced fat Tzatziki, hummus, or beetroot dip) <p>Tip: Serve dips with vegetable sticks and/or plain wholegrain crackers or pita bread as they are lower in fat and salt compared to most crackers.</p>
Tomato sauce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced salt tomato sauce <p>Tip: Serve sausages/burgers without sauce. Have a bottle on hand for people wanting to add it themselves.</p>
Desserts	
Cheesecake/ pavlova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cold, sliced fruit (e.g. watermelon, cantaloupe, grapes, strawberries) ● Fruit-based desserts and offer small serving sizes ● Try using reduced fat custard or yoghurt in place of regular cream, custard or ice-cream ● If offering cream or ice-cream, provide reduced fat varieties <p>Tip: Try our healthier recipes: Balsamic strawberries with Greek yoghurt , Fruit trifle with reduced fat custard and Spiced apple and yoghurt slice</p>
Chocolate coated ice-creams	<p>If offering ice-cream, frozen yoghurt or gelato*, provide reduced-fat varieties and offer in small serving sizes</p> <p><small>*Ice cream, frozen yoghurts and gelato may be AMBER or RED according to the Healthy Choices guidelines. To find out if a specific product fits the AMBER criteria, contact the Healthy Eating Advisory Service.</small></p>
Drinks	
Regular soft drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water: tap, still or sparkling ● Lightly flavoured waters. Try jugs of soda water with sliced fruit and mint, or a dash of fruit juice ● Diet soft drinks

All recipes available at www.heas.health.vic.gov.au

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