

# Healthy Potlucks: Tips for Hosting

Healthy potlucks are a great way to bring together work teams, community groups, or friends and family. They provide the chance to share tasty food, and they set aside time to have fun, catch up, or get to know one another.

You can find several healthy potluck themes and sign-up sheets to make it easy to set up, join in, and help out.

## Potluck Tips

- There may be people who want to join the potluck but cannot bring a food or supply item. Let everyone know they can choose to take part in other ways, such as:
  - set up the eating space
  - fill water jugs
  - make coffee and tea
  - host an icebreaker or a game
  - manage the sign-up sheets
  - take charge of the clean-up
- If you need to use plates and cutlery that you can throw away, look for options that you can compost or recycle.
- Ask everyone to bring dishes with lids to take home extra food (and reduce waste).
- Host a fun or active event during your potluck, such as a team-building exercise, scavenger hunt, or trivia contest.
- Let everyone know the final number of people who will join the potluck to help plan the amount of food they need to bring and to reduce food waste.
- Send a reminder a few days before the potluck so no one forgets!



# Food Tips

- Ask people to share any diet concerns or food allergies when you send the invite. Follow up to make sure everyone is aware of the need to change or add ingredients to the sign-up sheet.
  - Two handouts that may help you plan are [Gluten-Free Diet](#) and [Health Care and Religious Beliefs](#).
- Keep food safety in mind. Check out [Safe Food Serving](#) and [Safe Food Storing](#) for helpful tips. Be sure everyone follows this basic advice:
  - Wash hands before touching, serving, setting up, or putting away food.
  - Store food in the fridge until the potluck starts.
  - Place food back in the fridge as soon as the meal is over.
  - Keep hot foods hot in a slow cooker or electric roaster.
  - Make sure meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood do not sit at room temperature for more than 1–2 hours.
- Place salads, bean dishes, fruit, and vegetables within easy reach at the start of the food line so everyone is more likely to enjoy some of these healthy items.
- If you need ideas for healthy dressings, try [these recipes](#) for Dips & Spreads and Low Sodium Sauces. You can also use [Cooking Without Salt](#) for tasty, healthy ideas on how to flavour foods.
- If you serve baked goods or desserts, offer them in smaller portions. This way, everyone can sample a range of treats without wasting food or eating more than they want. Check out [these recipes](#) for Baked Goods and Desserts.
- Serve water, carbonated water, coffee, tea, or unsweetened iced tea instead of drinks with sugar. Try a refreshing recipe such as [Cucumber Water](#). Offer items that people can use to flavour plain or carbonated water, such as:
  - fresh mint leaves, lemongrass, or basil
  - raspberries, cherries, blackberries, strawberries, or blueberries
  - pomegranate seeds or melon slices
  - slices of pineapple, kiwi, peach, lemon, lime, grapefruit, or orange

