

# Buffet Best Practices

How to make your event

GREENER BY  
**DEF**AULT

*and cut carbon, save money,  
and attract attendees.*

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## Shift the ratios

Serve two plant-based entrees for every meat-based entree.

***Pro Tip:** Make sure the veg and meat entrees have different flavor profiles, to encourage guests to try all of the options.*

# Sample Menu #1:

## Mediterranean

*Packed full of flavor and protein with options to appeal to all diners*

- **Entrees:**
  - Crispy Baked Falafel (v)
  - Mujadara Lentils (v)
  - Za'atar Chicken
- **Sides (v):** tahini, baba ganoush, hummus, tabbouleh, garlic sauce, pita bread



## Sample Menu #2:

### Thai

*Packed full of flavor and protein with options to appeal to all diners*

- **Entrees:**
  - Thai Green Curry (v)
  - Pad Thai with Tofu (v)
  - Basil Chicken
- **Sides (v):** veggie potstickers, crispy spring rolls, tofu satay w/ peanut sauce



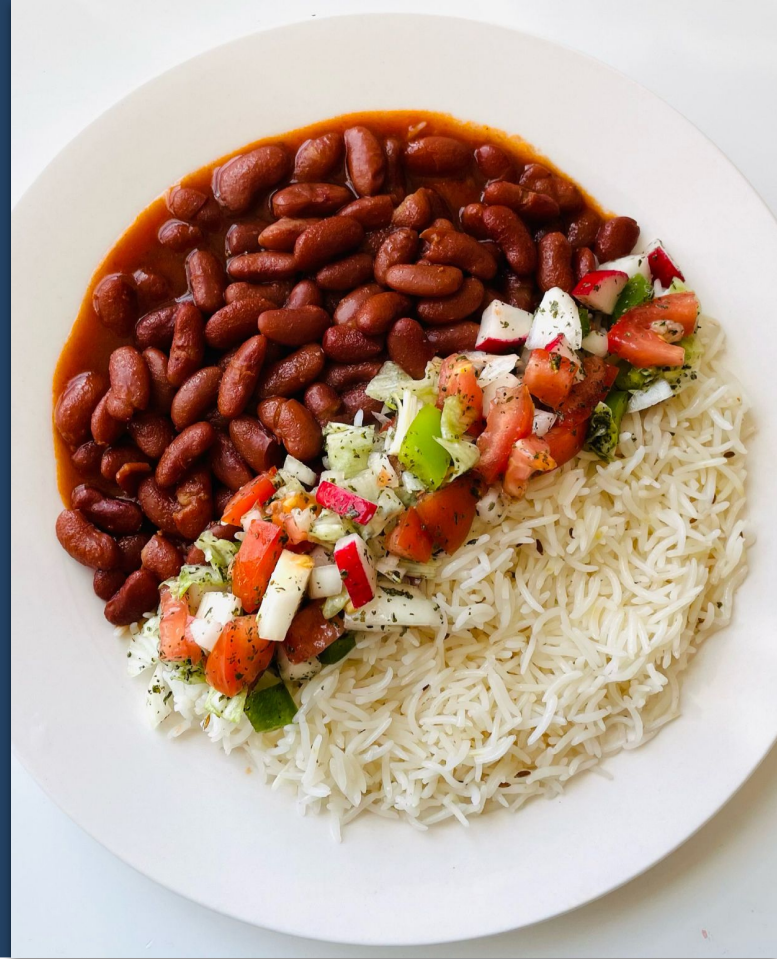


## Make it Delicious!

Work with your caterer to ensure the plant-based options are **familiar, flavorful, and filling**. Here are some tips on how to do that.

## Tip #1: Give 'Em Protein

If the plant-based option only contains grains and vegetables, request the addition of beans, tofu, or plant-based meat to add protein.



## Tip #2: Switch It Up

If multiple meals are being served, make sure they feature different proteins so that diners aren't eating tofu three times a day.



## Tip #3: Go Global

Opt for international cuisines that are naturally plant-forward, such as Mexican, Indian, Thai, Vietnamese, Ethiopian, or Mediterranean, so that people won't miss the meat.





## Tip #4: Trust Your Gut

If the option your caterer suggests doesn't sound familiar & appetizing to you, request changes to make a dish **you** would be excited to eat.

*Example: One venue offered to create a new plant-based dish called "Baba Ghanoush Lasagna." Instead, the client requested that they swap out beef with tofu in their existing Kung Pao Stir Fry.*





## Prime Placement

Plate and place entrees in a way that encourages people to fill their plates with plant-based options and use meat & dairy as garnishes.

## Tip #1: Lead with Plant-Based

Put plant-based items first in the main buffet line and meat and dairy at the end of the line.



## Tip #2: Keep it Simple

Make meat a protein add-on rather than the center of the plate by serving shredded roasted chicken rather than whole cuts of meat. Use smaller serving utensils to encourage moderate portions.



## Tip #3: Dairy on the Side

Make soups, salads, and entrees more inclusive by putting cheese on the side in a small serving bowl, rather than on top of dishes.

**Pro Tip:** Works well for other allergens like nuts and gluten too.



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## Tasty Titles

Label foods with names that feature flavors, provenance, and cooking styles, rather than terms like “vegan,” “meatless,” or “healthy.”

**Pro Tip:** Label dishes with the ingredients of concern they *DO* contain, i.e. “Contains dairy and gluten.” “Contains pork.” Otherwise, label with a small (v) symbol after the dish title.

# Language Example #1

*Indicating tradition, indulgence, location, or culinary techniques*

- Homestyle
- Cajun
- Classic
- Caramelized
- Glazed



# Language Example #1

*Indicating tradition, indulgence, location, or culinary techniques*

- ✘ Old version: “Vegan Mac n’ Cheese”
- ✔ New version: “Homestyle Mac with Creamy Cashew Cheese”





## Language Example #2

### *Stimulating the senses*

- Sizzlin'
- Zesty
- Crispy
- Juicy
- Tangy



## Language Example #2

### *Stimulating the senses*



Old version: “Vegetarian Burrito”



New version: “Sizzlin’ Southwestern Black  
Bean Burrito”



## Language Example #2

### *Stimulating the senses*

- ✘ Old version: “**Vegetarian Burrito**”
- ✔ New version: “**Sizzlin’ Southwestern Black Bean Burrito**”

**Pro Tip:** For more great naming ideas, check out the Stanford and Menus of Change **Edgy Veggies Toolkit**



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## Share Your Success!

Include photos of your delicious, sustainable meals & diner feedback in post-event comms.

**Pro Tip:** Greener by Default can calculate your carbon and water savings to report back to attendees!

# Need more help?

We offer one-on-one consultation for events serving more than 1,000 meals!

- Visit our website: [www.greenerbydefault.org](http://www.greenerbydefault.org)
- Contact Us: [info@greenerbydefault.org](mailto:info@greenerbydefault.org)

*If you use these strategies, we'd love to share your event on our social media! Send us your success stories or lessons learned.*