



toolbox

SERVING REFRESHMENTS AT A MEETING

If you feed them, they will come. Providing food at a meeting or other event can promote attendance and provide a welcoming atmosphere. If you've been asked to prepare refreshments for a meeting or workshop, here are some factors to consider.

WHAT TO SERVE

Simplicity is the key to preparing foods that can be enjoyed by a variety of people. Consider people's dietary restrictions, and offer a variety of refreshments that are low-fat, sugar-free, caffeinated and decaffeinated. Here are some tried and true suggestions from Brushy Fork experiences:

MORNING REFRESHMENTS

Coffee, with and without caffeine
Hot water for regular tea and herb tea
Donuts and pastries
Fruit
Bagels
Yogurt

AFTERNOON REFRESHMENTS

Sodas, with and without caffeine; diet and regular
Cookies, offer a variety for different tastes
Vegetables and dip
Soft pretzels and mustard
Bottled water
Coffee, with and without caffeine

HOW MUCH TO SERVE

The required amount of food depends on the age of the people you are serving and the time of day. An older crowd tends to eat less. For example, senior citizens will eat less than a high school football team. If you are serving food when people are likely to be hungry, for example after work or close to a mealtime, allow more per person.

The rule of thumb for small appetizers (such as cut fruit or vegetables or small cookies) is 5 to 6 pieces per person. Larger items such as the fruit, pretzels and yogurt mentioned above require as few as 1 piece per person.

HOW TO SERVE

Provide plates, napkins, spoons and forks, cups, party picks, serving containers, tablecloths, and other utensils necessary for serving and eating the refreshments. If people have to balance plates on their laps, offer spill-proof, small foods that are easy to handle. Also remember condiments such as creamer and sugar and salt.

HOW TO BE SAFE

Keep hot foods at 140 degrees or above and serve them promptly. If you can't serve foods quickly, use heating appliances such as crock pots, a steam table or chafing dishes.

Keep cold foods at 40 degrees or below. Use ice, coolers or a refrigerator and serve cold foods promptly.

ONE LAST NOTE (FOR THE ENVIRONMENT)

To decrease the environmental impact of your activity, avoid using styrofoam and provide containers for recycling aluminum cans and for composting leftovers. Providing a name-labeled mug for each participant to use all day is a good way to avoid using disposable cups.