

Barbecue Stress? 10 things you can change NOW!

With a little planning you can have a stress-free barbecue and keep your cookout crowd healthy and happy!



With the long awaited warmer weather, there's nothing better than gathering family and friends outdoors around the barbecue. However, grilling season can also bring on stress with our healthy eating intentions. Let's see some simple changes we can make now to keep us and our cookout crowd healthy and happy!

1. SLOW DOWN! With the abundance of food and friends at a BBQ, it is easy to [mindlessly](#) pop high calorie finger foods into your mouth throughout the course of a cookout. Try eating slowly, stop to drink water between bites and move away from the table to avoid temptation.
2. THINK! Try using a 1 to 10 hunger and fullness [scale](#) to determine how much you eat, rather than eating the same portions you always have. Keep in mind that you can eat anything...just not everything...
3. MAKE BIGGER BETTER! Increase [high volume, low density foods](#) like fruits or vegetables into your BBQ. Grilling intensifies the flavour of fruits and vegetables just as it does for meat, especially peppers, zucchini, aubergines, tomatoes, onions, or mushrooms. Try vegetable kebabs or combining lean meat or fish with fruit or veggies on a skewer or even a healthy veggie [pizza](#) on the grill!
4. TRY! Propose [alternative proteins](#) like lean turkey burgers, veggie burgers, fatty fishes like salmon or tuna, or grill-friendly extra firm [tofu](#).
5. SIDE THE SAUCE! Keep high calorie sauces such as mayonnaise, condiments, salad dressings and oils on the side where they can more easily be managed.
6. SWITCH IT! Try lower calorie versions of traditional sauces and dressings. Using low-fat yoghurt or cream cheese, flavoured mustards and vinegars or [fruit or vegetable based salsas](#), are great options that are readily available today.
7. ADD OPTIONS! Provide (or bring if you are invited) healthier options foods like vegetable or fruit salads to serve on the side, so that you know there are healthy options to fill up on In addition to traditional barbecue foods.
8. EAT BEFORE! Eat something healthy like fruit or yogurt before the BBQ so that you don't arrive famished and ready to devour anything (especially if you are invited and have no control over the menu). This might help make it easier to gage your hunger, manage your portions and drinking alcohol on a fuller stomach may allow you to feel less it's negative effects.
9. ALTERNATE! Drink a glass of water between each alcoholic beverage to help stay truly hydrated, prevent drunkenness and keep liquid calories down. Try various iced teas or flavoured waters served in fancy glasses which may better satisfy your epicurean attitude!
10. ENJOY THE PARTY! Dance, walk, play and talk! The activity may help avoid eating out of boredom and even burn some of the extra calories! BBQ's only happen during one season and with a little planning you can have the most stress-free barbecue possible and don't forget that your goal is not perfection, but to spend quality time with your loved ones.