Buffet Best Practices

Whether at office meetings or formal events, buffets offer an excellent opportunity to nudge diners towards delicious plant-based foods. Below are the most effective strategies:

**Mouthwatering Labels**

- Label foods featuring the flavors and provenance of the dish:
  - Use terms that indicate indulgence, tradition, location, culture, and/or the way the dish is prepared
    - i.e. Homestyle, old fashioned, Cajun, caramelized, glazed
  - Use language that stimulates the senses:
    - i.e. Sizzlin', crispy, juicy, creamy, or tangy
    - Instead of "Vegetarian Burrito," call it "Sizzlin' Southwestern Black Bean Burrito"
  - For more great naming suggestions, check out Stanford and Menus of Change's [Edgy Veggies Toolkit](#)
- Place a small (v) or 🌿 at the end of the dish title to denote it is vegetarian/vegan.
  - Avoid labeling plant-based foods with "vegan," "vegetarian," or "meatless" in the title.
  - Consider labeling dishes that do have animal products, rather than dishes that do not, such as "contains eggs" or "contains pork and dairy." This makes it easier for diners to identify potential allergens or ingredients of concern.

**Perceptive Placement**

Place plant-based entrées at the front of the buffet line in larger containers with larger serving utensils. Place meat and dairy products at the end of the buffet line in smaller containers with smaller serving utensils.

Want more tips? Visit [www.greenerbydefault.com](http://www.greenerbydefault.com) or email katie@betterfoodfoundation.org for one-on-one support.
Make Your Base Plant-Based

- Ensure that all plant-based entrées are filling, with adequate protein, and packed full of flavor.
  - International cuisines such as Mexican, Indian, and Middle Eastern are great options because diners expect them to be plant-forward.
  - Rather than offering a separate meat entrée, offer plain roasted chopped chicken at the end of the line so that people who want animal protein have it available as an add-on, but it doesn't compete with the plant-based entrée.
    - Make sure the chicken is cut into pieces so that people who want to add meat can take smaller portions.
    - Serve all animal protein with a smaller serving

Ratios

- If you're serving a meat entrée, make sure to offer a minimum of two complete plant-based entrees for every animal-based entrée.
  - Ensure that the meat entrée has a different flavor/texture profile than the plant-based entrees to encourage diners to try all of the options.
  - Below are some examples of menus with both plant-based and meat options that feature plant-based dishes packed full of flavor and protein that will appeal to all diners:
    - Middle Eastern
      - Crispy Baked Falafel (v)
      - Mujadara Lentils w/rice & crispy onions (v)
      - Roasted Chicken
      - Sides: tahini, baba ghanoush, hummus, cucumber salad, tabbouleh (all vegan), vegan feta cheese, dairy feta cheese
    - Thai
      - Tofu & Vegetable Curry (v)
      - Tempeh Pad Thai (or other noodle dish)
      - Chicken Satay
      - Sides: spring rolls, salads (all vegan)