



Cooking for a crowd? Make sure everyone gets their fill with these tips.

How to cater for various dietary requirements

One of the most difficult things about hosting a meal is catering to different dietary requirements. From paleo to vegan, individuals come to the table with a range of unique dietary needs, both medical and preferential. So how can you ensure there is something for everyone on your table?

Make sure you ask the right questions

When it comes to family, many people assume that you already know about their dietary needs. But this is not always the case. Make sure you are prepared ahead of time by asking people to state their dietary needs when they RSVP, whether that be by phone call, text or email.

Research the diet's restrictions

You may have heard the words paleo, keto and vegan thrown around the room, but do you know what they really mean? Each one has its own limitations so it's worth reading up on your guests' dietary requirements before you plan your menu, so you don't end up with an unplanned hospital run on Christmas day. When it comes to allergies, it's also essential you understand how careful you need to be. For some people, not eating the food directly is good enough. For others, it may be essential you use separate knives, boards and dishes to ensure there's not the even the tiniest speck of contamination.

Plan your meal

Based on your research, start looking at recipes that are made for different diets. You may only need to make small adjustments, such as putting sour cream on the side or letting guests add their own cheese.

You will often find that a buffet works best when there are a lot of mouths to feed because you can keep your main dish simple, and then get creative with your sides, ensuring there are no empty plates.

Don't be afraid to ask for help

As a host, it's easy to feel like you need to cook everything yourself, but don't be afraid to ask for help. Guests with difficult dietary requirements are usually happy to bring a plate along or guide you in the right direction. Whether it's a main dish, or a side, it will help take some of the stress out of entertaining, while bringing some new flavours to your table.

Label the food

If you are really worried about serving your vegan friend feta by accident, safeguard yourself by labelling all your dishes, just like they do at a café. Whether it's a simple 'V' for vegan or 'GF' for gluten free, your guests will appreciate the gesture. You can go into more detail and list all the ingredients if allergies are what are guiding your choices.

While we might call them dietary restrictions, they can actually help you to expand your menu and think creatively when it comes to cooking. Looking for some recipe inspiration? Here are some good places to start...

Vegetarian

[Roast beetroot salad](#)



[Cheesy roast cauliflower](#)



[Vegetable gratin](#)



Gluten Free

[Warm Atlantic trout salad](#)



[Hasselback pumpkin salad with sumac onion and yoghurt dressing](#)



[Chilli and lime prawns](#)



Lactose Free

[Baked teriyaki salmon fillets](#)



[Stuffed capsicums with smoked paprika and tomato sauce](#)



[Honey roasted pork fillets with grilled figs](#)



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