

This brochure aims to further advance UNICEF's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12 on "Responsible consumption and production" and SDG 15 "Life on Land." As such, our teams must have a focus on the food we share both within and outside UNICEF's premises.

Our aim is to make UNICEF's food consumption at events nutritious, safe and sustainable. We can do this by choosing healthier and more sustainable catering when hosting events. The food we share should encourage nutritious foods and beverages, avoiding harmful products that not only contribute to negative health consequences for our people and guests but also do not facilitate fruitful gatherings.

In a context of global climate crisis, we must also be intentional on not contributing to further environmental degradation. By choosing small portions and quantities of local and organic products and avoiding single-use plastics, we reduce food waste, transportation costs, and chemical exposure – thus making a healthy choice for us and the planet.



This note of inspiration is meant for all UNICEF offices globally, regionally and in countries and is inspired by UNICEF and WHO guidance on food, nutrition, health and sustainability. While different regional contexts will present different cultural, geographic and financial constraints, the hope is that these guidelines energize our offices to adapt to their local realities. On the back page there should be an example of a nutritious, safe and sustainable catering order for your context.

Finally, it is important to communicate our intentions with guests. Let them know we care about their nutrition and health and for the present and future of our planet, and that we have intentionally shaped the food and beverages served at the gathering accordingly.

MENU OPTIONS

(to be tailored to context)

Breakfast

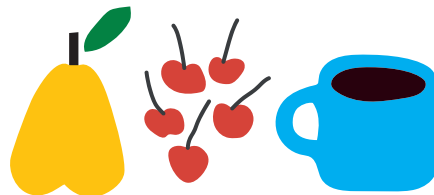
- Whole grain sandwiches
- Plain yogurt
- Fresh sliced fruits
- House blend coffee
- Black & herbal teas

Lunch

- Fish fillet
- Chicken kabob
- Vegetarian frittata
- Lemon rice with mushrooms
- Mashed potatoes
- Green salad
- Steamed vegetables
- Fresh fruits
- Whole grain bread

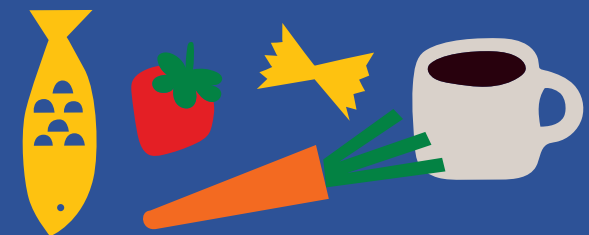
Snacks and Beverages

- House blend coffee
- Black & herbal teas
- Natural water
- Glasses provided for water fountain refills



THE FOOD WE SHARE

Inspiration for nutritious, safe and sustainable meetings



FOOD

Nutritious

The menu for the breakfast or lunch breaks should offer a choice of seasonal fresh fruits, raw and cooked vegetables, and whole grains.

For protein preference, favor plant-based protein (e.g. lentils, tofu, chickpea, etc.), local wild-caught seafood, eggs, and lean meats rather than processed red meats.

In addition to fruits and vegetables, unsalted and unsweetened nuts provide a healthy snack.

Avoid ultra-processed foods high in fats, salt, and/or added sugars (i.e. chips, cookies, croissants, muffins)

It is important to keep in mind that catering should offer healthy and balanced options for vegetarian and other special needs diets.

Sustainable

Reduce the amount of meat that is served as much as possible and offer plant-based and vegetarian meal selections. Select foods and beverages that are:

Local: food produced in the area where it will be consumed to reduce the transportation and ensure seasonality

Organic: food produced without pesticides or insecticides in order to reduce our guests' exposure to chemicals.

Frugal

Prioritize quality over quantity, which should make it easier to balance both serving sizes and the budget.

Food should not be served in excess but rather with quantities aligned to the recommended daily energy and nutrient intakes for an average participant.

Favor small portions and quantities; it benefits people and the planet and reduces food waste.

DRINK

Water is life – let's treasure and promote it. Clean and palatable drinking water should be made widely available in UNICEF hosted events.

Avoid single-use plastic bottles, and prefer to serve water in reusable containers or a water fountain.

Unsweetened hot beverages like coffee, tea and herbal infusions can also be made available during meetings and meeting breaks. Avoid providing sugar.

All sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g. soda, sweet tea, flavored milk, processed fruit juice, etc.) are to be avoided as they are terribly damaging to people's health.

Offer fruit or vegetable juices that are 100% natural, local, have no added sugar, and are served in small quantities.

Alcohol should be avoided.

MOVEMENT

Though the primary focus of this brochure is food, beverages, and sustainability – staying physically active should also remain a key element of any healthy meeting hosted by UNICEF.

Favor physical activity and movement

- To the extent possible choose venues that are easily accessible by foot.
- Guarantee activities are inclusive of people living with physical disabilities.
- Be cognizant of the local language used to encourage movement.
- Facilitate standing during presentations, including – if possible – high tables.
- Sprinkle inclusive and quick energizers every 60 min to keep people alert.
- Designate a few people to lead activities, and if not, use some fun options on YouTube.

Music is encouraged, always

ENVIRONMENT

Sustainable food practices help reduce waste and lower the environmental impact of meetings.

Minimize waste by using reusable mugs and containers, opting for paper or compostable cups, avoiding plastic bottles and utensils, and choosing reusable serving containers and utensils whenever possible. Avoid using towelettes and wet wipes as they are not recyclable.

Collaboration with catering vendors is key to ensuring nutritious, healthy and sustainable practices in meetings. Work with vendors to create customized menus that meet UNICEF needs and values. Consider partnering with vendors who have a proven track record of environmentally responsible practices and ethical sourcing.

Confirm the number of food items needed with caterers to minimize food waste by ordering slightly less than the expected number of attendees.

Order food and drinks in bulk platters instead of single servings to reduce packaging waste. If possible, ask the caterer to provide food in glass or steel containers that can be washed and reused for future meetings.

Aim for zero food waste.

