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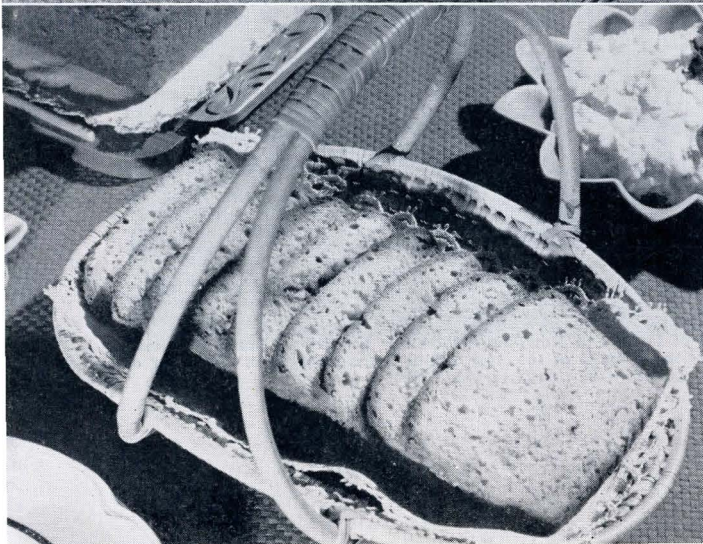
## EC954 Revised 1946 The Buffet Meal

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# The Buffet Meal

E.C. 954 Revised 46  
July, 1946  
Extension Service  
College of Agriculture  
University of Nebraska  
Lincoln, Nebraska



# The Buffet Meal\*

MANY FAMILIES at one time or another have occasion to express hospitality by entertaining a larger number of guests than can be served at the table. Under such circumstances the buffet style of service is deservedly popular. It is suitable for use at club meetings, breakfast or luncheon parties, covered dish or pot-luck suppers, picnics, Sunday evening suppers, wedding receptions, class reunions, church entertainments, or similar occasions where the number to be served may be more or less indefinite. The reason for the popularity of the buffet type of service may be attributed to its informality, simplicity, friendliness, attractiveness, ease of service, convenience in use of space, and the requirement for minimum equipment in china, linen, and silver.

Adaptations of buffet service include the Swedish *smörgåsbord*, the *al fresco* supper, and the outdoor garden or porch party. With increased interest in foreign foods, the foreign buffet affords a means of introducing interest and variety into meals which might have a tendency to become routine and commonplace.



Photo courtesy National Livestock and Meat Board

\* Prepared by the Divisions of Foods and Nutrition and Family Economics, Home Economics Department, and the extension nutritionists of the Agricultural Extension Service, University of Nebraska.

A buffet meal may be served in the forenoon as a breakfast or brunch, at one o'clock as a luncheon, after bridge or the club meeting in the late afternoon, as a supper in the evening, or as a reception in the afternoon or evening.

### Table Setting and Decorations

ORIGINALLY, the term buffet service was applied to service from a buffet or sideboard, and the general idea is still the same, but the table is now the center of interest. The table is made as attractive as possible, using linen, china, and silver in keeping with the nature of the occasion. The table should be set with accessories appropriate to each other and to the food which is served. Peasant linens and bright-colored pottery are suitable for informal affairs. Suitable decorations for such a setting might be fruits, vegetables, the coarser type of flowers, such as zinnias, hollyhocks and calendulas, and candlesticks of pottery, wood, pewter, brass, or copper.

For a more formal or semi-formal type of occasion, fine linen damask or lace, lovely china, glass and silver are appropriate. A cloth which covers the table is usually more convenient than doilies or runners because there is more space for the arrangement of dishes and silver. Flowers such as roses, carnations, snapdragons, and chrysanthemums may be used for a centerpiece. Candlesticks of crystal or silver are in keeping with this type of table arrangement.



Photo courtesy National Livestock and Meat Board



In setting the table, attention should be given to balance and proportion, so that the table gives the impression of a harmonious unit. The table covering and decoration give excellent opportunity for creative, artistic expression and individuality.

### Buffet Table Arrangement

THE TABLE may be placed in the center of the room, at one end or side of the room, or with one side against a wall if room space is limited. Usually a maximum of table-edge space is desirable for buffet service, and this is necessarily limited when the table is placed against the wall.

The arrangement of food, dishes, and silver will depend upon the menu and the plan of serving. The main course only may be served from the buffet table, or the main course and beverage may be served as one course. If both main course and dessert are served from the buffet table, the table will be cleared after the main course, and the dessert or the dessert and beverage will be arranged conveniently for serving.

For the main course, a stack of six or eight plates is usually placed at one end of the table near the main dish or the salad. The serving silver is placed beside the dish of food. If only a spoon is required, it is placed at the right of the food dish. If both a spoon and a fork are needed, the spoon is placed at the right and the fork at the left of the dish of food.

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. CENTER PIECE      | 7. CASSEROLE       |
| 2. CANDLE-STICKS     | 8. ROLLS           |
| 3. SALAD PLATTER     | 9. JELLY           |
| 4. 5. SERVING SILVER | 10. RELISH         |
| 6. PLATES            | 11. COFFEE SERVICE |

- |                     |
|---------------------|
| 12. CUPS            |
| 13. SUGAR & CREAMER |
| 14. 15. SILVER      |
| 16. NAPKINS         |
| 17. TRAYS           |

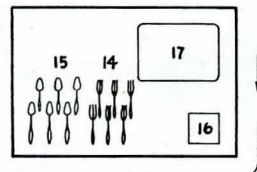


DIAGRAM SHOWING ARRANGEMENT OF SERVICE TABLE WITH TRAYS, NAPKINS AND SILVER.

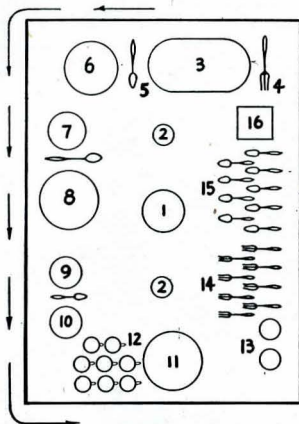


DIAGRAM SHOWING ARRANGEMENT OF TABLE FOR SEMI-FORMAL OR INFORMAL BUFFET SERVICE.

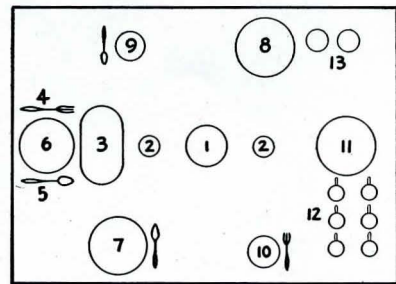


DIAGRAM SHOWING ARRANGEMENT OF TABLE WHEN SERVICE TABLE IS USED FOR SEMI-FORMAL OR INFORMAL BUFFET SERVICE.



Photo courtesy American Meat Institute

Other foods such as salad, vegetables, buttered rolls, sandwiches, and relishes are placed on the table so as to be accessible for guests to help themselves and yet in an orderly, logical, and well-balanced table arrangement. Serving silver that may be needed should be placed beside the dishes of food.

The salad may be an informal tossed salad arranged in a lettuce-lined bowl, or it may be served in individual molds or divided to have the platter look attractive even after several servings have been removed. A molded salad may also be in the form of a large mold.

If the beverage is to be served with the main course, it may be placed on the table opposite the main dish, with the cups arranged in an orderly and convenient manner. If preferred, the beverage service may be on the buffet or service table. Accompaniments for the beverage, such as cream and sugar, are usually placed on the table next to the beverage, so that guests may help themselves.

Silver and napkins are usually arranged so that they may be picked up last.

The guests may pass around the table either to the right or to the left depending upon the arrangements of the table, rooms, or other furnishings.

### **Types of Buffet Service**

THERE ARE, in general, three types of buffet service—the informal, semi-formal, and formal. The choice may depend upon the occasion,



number of guests, facilities in the home, and extent of service available. The guests may hold the filled plates on their laps, or small tables may be provided. These tables should be covered with lunch cloths, may be provided with decorations, and are usually set with napkins, silver and glasses. The beverage cups and saucers may also be on these tables if desired. If there are to be men guests at a buffet meal, small tables should be provided, because men dislike trying to balance a plate or tray on their laps while eating. For informal or semi-formal service, trays may be used if desired. They may be placed on a service table.

**Informal Buffet Service.** Informal buffet service requires no waitresses because the guests serve themselves. This form of service is suitable for relatively small groups. Dishes, food, napkins, and silver are arranged on the buffet table.

Each guest takes a plate and passes around the table, taking up the foods as they have been arranged in order of their importance, coming to the beverage, silver and napkins last. It is more convenient to place the silver so that it may be taken last, because it is difficult to hold silver and serve a plate at the same time unless trays are provided.

If second servings are desired, the hostess may invite the guests to return to the table to serve themselves or, if she prefers, she may pass the serving dishes to the guests. While the guests are eating the main course, the table may be cleared and the dessert course placed. The hostess may then ask the guests to place their first course plates upon a service table or tea-cart and invite them to serve dessert to themselves.

**Semi-formal Buffet Service.** This type of buffet service is perhaps used most frequently. Assisting friends of the hostess may be seated at one or both ends of the table. The friend at one end of the table may serve the main dish, or perhaps the salad, while the friend at the opposite end pours the beverage. The guests help themselves to other foods—vegetables, rolls, relish—and to silver and napkins. This type of service is convenient for the guests, as it is sometimes difficult to hold a plate in one hand and serve one's self food such as salad.

The dessert course may be placed on the table, as in the case of informal buffet service, and be served by assisting friends, or it may be served from the kitchen. In the latter case, waitresses who may be young friends of the hostess will take the main course plates from the guests before serving the dessert. A waitress may take two main-course plates to the kitchen and return with two desserts, then remove two more main course plates and so on. Usually, the assisting friends leave the table after they have finished serving the food to the guests. They serve themselves and join the other guests.

**Smörgåsbord.\*** A gift from Sweden to America is the *smörgåsbord*. During recent years it has grown in popularity as an American way of entertaining. Unfortunately the term *smörgåsbord* is sometimes used for any buffet service.

*Smörgås* means bread and butter, or sandwich, and *bord* refers to table. Though the whole term really means sandwich table, neither

\* Description of *smörgåsbord* and menu contributed by Mrs. Evar Anderson, Lincoln, Nebraska.



Photo courtesy National Dairy Council

sandwiches nor canapes are ever used, but interesting and unusual breads and sandwich materials. One always finds different kinds of rye bread and *knäcke bröd* (rye krisp) and butter in fancy shapes. Close to these and interestingly arranged are platters of cold meats and cheese (always *kumming ost* which is a Swedish cheese with caraway seed) and all kinds of pickled, smoked, fried, boiled and dried fish. The Swedish people enjoy their salt water fish as well as their fresh water fish. A rather large appetizer table may include an array of colorful salads and homemade pickles.

The correct procedure is for the guest to serve himself from this table of appetizers and relishes, but he should not over-emphasize the appetizer angle for there will be additional food. He may or may not be seated at another table to enjoy these appetizers. When he is ready for his second course, he returns to the table and helps himself to the main course foods, more bread and butter and coffee, the national beverage of Sweden. The main course includes ham, baked or boiled, roast beef and pork, many kinds of homemade sausages, and always the favorite little spiced meat ball about the size of a walnut. It is proper to return as many times as one desires for more of either appetizers or main course dishes. Sometimes one returns to the *smörgåsbord* for his dessert, but more often he remains seated and the main course dishes are removed by a waitress who then serves the dessert and more coffee.



Americans often serve a supper *smörgåsbord*. Here they combine the appetizer table with a few main course dishes. The suggested menu in this circular is of that type.

The table is always covered with a handwoven linen or lovely damask cloth. The table is placed so that guests can walk all around, and great emphasis is laid on a beautiful, well-planned table arrangement, and food with eye-appeal as well as taste-appeal.

**Formal Buffet Service.** This service, though formal, is much less so than formal service at a table. It may be used for large numbers of guests, as at wedding receptions. Plates, napkins, and silver are usually placed on a service table at the side of the room to avoid overcrowding the table. Instead of going around the table, the guests are seated in the dining room and in adjoining rooms. Duplicate services are arranged at each end of the serving table. Friends of the hostess are seated at opposite ends of the table and each serves half of the plates. The served plates are taken to the seated guests by waitresses who may be young friends of the hostess. Detailed directions for serving such a meal are as follows:

1. The waitress brings two empty plates from the service table and places one plate (left hand, left side) before the woman who is serving.
2. The waitress lifts the filled plate (left hand, left side), and places the empty plate (right hand, left side) in its place.
3. The waitress goes to the serving table and places a fork on the plate, a napkin under it, and carries it to a guest, taking care that the handle of the fork is in a convenient position for the guest.

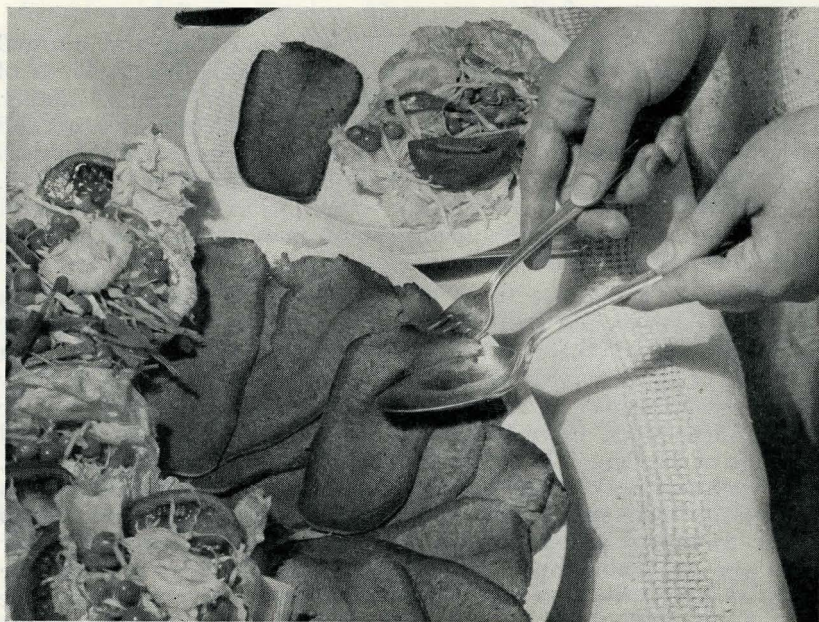


Photo courtesy U. S. Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics



4. The waitress gets another empty plate from the service table and continues to exchange plates at the serving table and to pass the filled ones until all the guests are served.

5. Waitresses pass rolls and relishes. These are passed a second time and taken to the kitchen.

6. Small glasses of water arranged on a tray are passed to those who desire them.

7. Coffee may be served with either the main course or the dessert course. A tray containing filled coffee cups may be used. Another waitress follows with a tray containing cream, sugar, and coffee spoons.

8. The buffet table is cleared and arranged for dessert.

9. Waitresses may remove two main course plates at a time, being sure not to remove the napkin.

10. The dessert is served in the same manner as the main course. If preferred, the dessert course may be served from the kitchen.

11. The waitresses pass nuts and candies. These are repassed once.

12. When all the guests have been served, the waitresses remove all dishes from the buffet table, leaving cloth and decorations.

13. The waitresses relieve the guests of dessert plates and napkins.

### The Menu

BUFFET SERVICE necessitates certain limitations in planning the menu. From the form of service it would be inferred that the menu should be relatively simple. Available facilities and equipment should be considered. Two courses are usually sufficient—a main course and a dessert. A tomato or fruit juice cocktail may be served before the guests are invited to come to the buffet table. The food should be selected so that it will be appropriate for the type of meal planned, such as Swedish foods for a *smörgåsbord*. The menu should be seasonable and attractive, and is frequently planned to carry out a color scheme. It should be planned so that the food will go on the plate without overcrowding. Foods which are too juicy or creamy should be avoided as they are apt to detract from the appearance of the plate. The food for a buffet party should not require much last minute preparation, and as far as possible should be the kind that keeps well.

For a buffet meal, the food should be such as can be easily eaten with a fork unless small tables are provided. Likewise, salad or bread and butter plates, and saucers for the beverage cups are not usually used in buffet service. The use of tall-stemmed sherbets, parfait glasses, and goblets is undesirable when the plate or a tray is held on the lap. In this case it is well to serve buttered rolls so as to avoid the need of a butter spreader.

The main course generally consists of one or two hot dishes, a salad, rolls or sandwiches, and one or two relishes. A substantial salad may replace one of the hot dishes. Foods should be served at appropriate temperatures. Fresh vegetable salads should be crisp, and hot foods should be very hot. An electric casserole may be used for keeping hot such foods as buttered vegetables or creamed dishes. Foods cooked in a casserole are desirable for buffet service for the same reason.



There should be extra serving dishes filled and ready to bring in from the kitchen so that as the ones at the table are emptied they may be replaced without delay.

## Suggested Dishes for Buffet Meals

### Main Dishes

#### Scalloped Dishes

Chicken  
Veal  
Oysters  
Potatoes with Ham  
Ham and Eggs

#### Creamed Dishes

Ham and Mushrooms  
Sweetbreads and Mushrooms  
Chicken in Rice Ring  
Scotch Woodcock

Ham or Chicken Mousse  
Egg or Sweetbread Cutlets  
Curried Veal and Rice  
Deviled Crabmeat

Baked Beans

Assorted Cold Meats

#### Casseroles

Chicken, Rice and Almond  
Chicken and Vegetable  
Rice and Tuna Fish  
Tuna and Potato Chip  
Ham and Noodles

Chicken Pie  
Hot Stuffed Eggs  
Hungarian Goulash  
Southern Hash  
Spanish Rice

Shrimp Creole

Veal Birds

Chicken a la King on Rosettes

Welsh Rarebit with Rice Croquettes

Baked Ham and Spoonbread or Sally Lunn

### Vegetables

#### Potatoes

Scalloped  
Stuffed  
Shoestring  
Chips

#### Baked

Lattice  
Au Gratin  
Hot Potato Salad  
French Fried

#### Buttered Vegetables

Green Beans—English Style  
Cauliflower and Brussels Sprouts  
Baby Lima Beans  
Onions



Photo courtesy American Meat Institute



#### Sweet Potatoes

Croquettes  
Scalloped with Apples  
Hawaiian

#### Creamed Vegetables

Carrots with Green Beans  
Carrots and Onions  
Carrots and Celery  
Cabbage—Cheese Sauce

#### Buttered Vegetables

Cauliflower  
Parsnip Croquettes  
Succotash  
Harvard Beets  
Scalloped Carrots and Apples  
Carrot in Sweet-and-Sour Sauce  
Scalloped Green Beans with Mushrooms  
Scalloped Cauliflower with Cheese Sauce

#### Salads

##### Stuffed Tomato

Tomato and Cottage Cheese  
Tomato, Cucumber, and Onion  
Tomato and Pineapple  
Asparagus and Pimiento  
Cabbage and Apple  
Cabbage and Carrot  
Combination Vegetable  
Frozen Cheese

Orange and Grapefruit  
Stuffed Cinnamon Apple  
Peach with Cottage Cheese  
Pear with Grated Cheese  
Pineapple with Cheese  
Grapefruit and Avocado  
Banana and Cherry  
Waldorf  
Combination Fruit  
Chicken

#### Salad Bowls

Lettuce Hearts and Endive  
Lettuce and Watercress  
Lettuce, Sliced Cucumbers, Radishes,  
and Green Pepper Rings  
Lettuce, Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Green  
Pepper, and Bermuda Onions

Red Cabbage, Peanuts, Onions  
Cabbage, Carrots, Green Pepper  
Rutabagas, Spinach, Radish  
Spinach, White and Red Cabbage  
Potato  
Julienne Vegetables  
Watercress

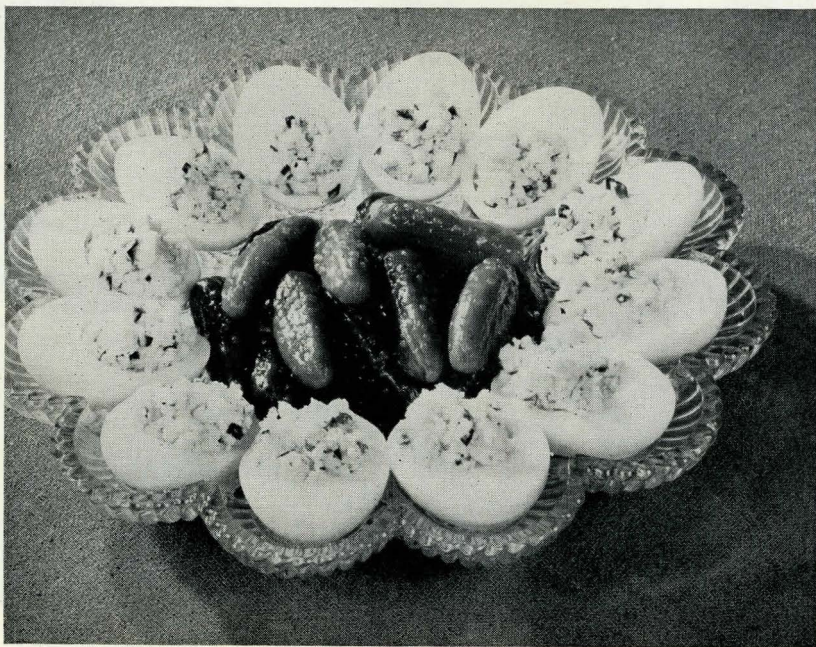


Photo courtesy H. J. Heinz Co.



### Molded Salads

Golden Glow  
Tomato Aspic  
Jellied Vegetable  
Tomato Jelly and Cottage Cheese  
Molded Salmon  
Chicken or Veal in Aspic

Bing Cherry  
Pears in Lime Gelatin  
Molded Apple and Orange Ring  
Jellied Cranberry  
Grape  
Fruit Melon Mold

### Bread and Rolls

Sandwiches  
Yeast Rolls  
Parker House  
Cloverleaf  
Crescent  
Twin  
Finger  
Bowknot  
Poppy Seed  
Sesame Seed  
Hot Cross  
Kolaches  
Cinnamon

Quick Breads  
Biscuits and variations  
Muffins and variations  
Orange Pin Wheels  
Scones  
Steamed Brown Bread  
Gingerbread  
Nut Bread  
Orange Bread  
Prune Bread  
Raisin Bread  
Banana Bread  
Graham Bread  
Toasted English Muffins

### Relishes

Pickles  
Dill Pickle Fans

Cauliflower Flowerettes  
Raw Turnip Wedges



Photo courtesy Wheat Flour Institute

Olives  
 Spiced Fruits  
 Vegetable Relish  
 Chutney  
 Chow Chow  
 Carrot and Lemon Relish  
 Cranberry, Apple and Orange Relish  
 Raw Carrot Strips  
 Celery Curls  
 Radish Roses, Tulips or Chrysanthemums

Rutabaga Strips  
 Stuffed Celery  
 Jelly  
 Jam  
 Preserve  
 Conserve  
 Marmalade  
 Honey

### Desserts

#### Frozen

Vanilla Ice Cream with Fresh Frozen Strawberries  
 Mock Lime Sherbet  
 Raspberry Ice with Marshmallow Sauce  
 Hot Fudge Sundae  
 Butterscotch Sundae  
 Meringue Shells with Ice Cream and Fresh Berries

#### Pastry

Lemon Chiffon Pie—Whipped Cream  
 Pecan Pie  
 Pumpkin Chiffon Tarts

#### Cakes

Upside Down Cake  
 Date Torte  
 Chocolate Roll  
 Orange Short Cake  
 Ice Box Cake (Sponge Cake Basis)  
 Orange Cup Cakes  
 Brownies  
 Assorted Cookies

#### Miscellaneous

Bavarian Cream  
 Assorted Cheese and Crackers  
 Baked Apple Crisp

## Suggested Menus for Buffet Meals

### A. Suitable for Semi-formal Service using Plates, Trays, or Small Tables

#### I

Chicken, Rice, and Mushroom Casserole  
 Buttered Green Beans  
 Sliced Tomatoes Celery Curls  
 Buttered Cloverleaf Rolls Crabapple Jelly  
 Orange Milk Sherbet Chocolate Cup Cake  
 Coffee

#### II

Scotch Woodcock on Toasted English Muffins  
 Potato Chips  
 Tossed Vegetable Salad Bowl  
 Assorted Olives  
 Twin Half-and-Half Rolls  
 Grape Conserve  
 Tea  
 Fresh or Frozen Strawberry Tarts

#### III

Assorted Cold Meats  
 Hot Potato Salad  
 Buttered Green Beans—English Style  
 Fresh Vegetable Relish Platter  
 Crescent Rolls Raspberry Jam  
 Assorted Cookies  
 Hot Spiced Fruit Punch

#### IV

Tomatoes Stuffed with Chicken Salad  
 Scalloped Cabbage Potato Chips  
 Bread and Butter Pickles  
 Poppy Seed Rolls  
 Prune Filled Jelly Roll  
 Hot Chocolate

#### V

Egg Croquettes Creamed Mushrooms  
 Tomatoes and Cucumbers on Watercress  
 Bowknot Rolls  
 Golden Cottage Pudding  
 Orange Sauce  
 Coffee





Photo courtesy Wheat Flour Institute

### B. Suitable for Informal Buffet Service

#### I

Baked Beans      Boston Brown Bread  
Chili Sauce  
Raw Spinach and Endive Salad  
Apple Crisp  
Coffee

#### II

Savory Meat Loaf      Potatoes au Gratin  
Red and White Cabbage Slaw  
Buttered Parker House Rolls  
Jelly Roll  
Coffee

#### III

Chicken Chow Mein      Rice  
Sliced Tomatoes      Raw Rutabaga Wedges  
Green Pepper Strips  
Orange Rolls  
Tea

#### IV

Scalloped Potatoes with Ham and Peas  
Red Cabbage, Onion and Peanut Salad  
Buttered Whole Wheat Rolls  
Grape Marmalade  
Orange Sponge Cake      Hot Chocolate

### C. Buffet Breakfasts

#### I

Fruit Cup  
Scrambled Eggs      Sausages  
Hot Biscuits      Preserves  
Coffee

#### II

Cantaloupe  
Omelet Souffle  
Blueberry Muffins  
Hot Chocolate

### III

Grapefruit Juice  
Devilled Eggs en Casserole  
Scones  
Coffee

### IV

Fresh Unstemmed Strawberries  
Powdered Sugar  
Cornbread with Creamed Dried Beef  
Coffee or Chocolate

## D. Suitable for Formal Buffet Service

### I

Brick Ice Cream  
Petit Fours  
Coffee  
Salted Nuts      Mint Wafers

### II

Ice Cream Molds  
Frosted Cup Cakes  
Salted Almonds      Bon-bons  
Coffee

## E. Sandwich Buffet

Assorted Breads and Crackers  
Creamed Butter  
Assorted Spreads  
Spiced Pears      Radishes      Stuffed Celery  
Coffee      Chocolate

Have an electric toaster on the table for those who prefer toasted sandwiches. A sandwich buffet affords a delightfully informal way of serving a group after square dancing or for a Sunday night supper.

## G. Smörgåsbord \*

*Inlagd Sill*  
(Pickled Herring)  
*Tunga*  
(Cold Tongue)

*Sylta*  
(Head Cheese)  
*Potatis Korf*  
(Potato Sausage)

*Potatis med Smör och Persilja*  
(Potatoes Persillade)

*Köttbullar*  
(Meat Balls)  
*Syltada Rödbeter*  
(Pickled Beets)

*Bruna Bönor*  
(Brown Beans)  
*Grönsaksfat*  
(Vegetable Platter)

*Morötter med Arter*  
(Buttered Carrots and Peas)

*Frukt Salad*  
(Fruit Salad)

*Råg Bröd*  
(Rye Bread)

*Bullar*  
(Rolls)

*Knäcke Bröd*  
(Rye Krisp)

*Smör*  
(Butter)

*Kumming Ost*  
(Caraway Cheese)

*Ost*  
(Cheese)

*Ost Kaka*  
(Cheese Pudding)

*Lingon*  
(Lingon Berries)

*Kaffe*  
(Coffee)

*Kaffe Bröd*  
(Coffee Bread)

*Smörbakelser*  
(Sprits)

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