



# Catering for Pasifika communities

There's no one-size-fits-all set of recommendations for catering for New Zealand's diverse Pasifika communities. Whatever size of the group you are catering for, use the Food and Drink Traffic Light highlighted in the article [Manaaki at mahi - kai to enhance hauora/wellbeing at work](#), and consider these recommendations.

- **Food is a key part of the Pasifika culture** - What you serve others is an indication of your generosity of spirit and your respect for your guests. Rather than make that about quantity, make what you offer about quality - choose smaller amounts of delicious food that will enhance their health.
- **Go for fresh fish and vegetables** - Increasing numbers of people in Pasifika communities are becoming vegetarian or pescatarian. For example, sushi, summer rolls with plenty of vegetables, skewers with chicken, prawn and vegetables are all tasty and portion-controlled. Taro leaves are also popular and nutritious.
- **Offer some hot food** - Having some hot options available is seen as a mark of the regard you hold your guests, so make sure you offer something hot.
- **For sweets, choose fruit** - Rather than a sugar-sweet dessert, offer fruit. A cheeseboard with a selection of cheese is also a good choice (slices of fruit can be used instead of crackers).
- **Be alcohol free** - Alcohol would very rarely be offered or expected.
- **Food timing** - A small snack and cup of something before a long meeting is a good idea, with a meal offered at the end. Try to time meetings to include a meal where you

can make the most nutritional difference (breakfast or lunch).

- **Offer a blessing** - All meetings will begin and end with a prayer and a blessing for the food must always be said before eating.
- **Elders and guests are served first** - Often food will be brought over to the elders. Those holding the meeting take their food last.



## Who caters?

Meetings with Pasifika people might be held in all sorts of venues - church and community halls, scout halls, even early childhood centres. Whatever the venue, ask your contact how they would like to do the catering - some communities prefer to cater themselves, while others will welcome off-site caterers.

If you're not doing or ordering your own catering, make sure what the community is planning to provide fits with your organisation's own guidelines. Always be aware of dietary and culture requirements, and tactfully suggest healthier alternatives if their menu doesn't fit with your organisation's food and drink guidelines.

## Who pays?

Generally a cost per head will be agreed upon and your organisation will pay. A koha is appreciated and is usually added to the catering total, or given to people who speak or perform specialised services.

In short, if you feel like someone deserves a little extra, that's when you would offer a koha.

## For more

Find these resources on the [Manaaki at Mahi resource page](#) on [Wellplace.nz](#)