

# CANDY BUFFET GUIDE

## PLANNING A PARTY?

One of the great things about candy buffets is they can be made up of anything you like! It just comes down to personal taste. Common candy buffets might include a mixture of hard and soft lollies, cupcakes, chocolates and anything in between! Of course, a bonus of having a candy table is that your guests can enjoy sweet treats during the festivities and also take a bag home for later. Candy buffets can be formal, frugal, delightful or whimsical.

Aside from the fact they offer a colourful visual delight at your birthday party, christmas party, wedding reception or corporate promotional event, they can also be an economical way to add a little extra personality to your celebrations – and they provide an abundance of sweet options for your guests. The visual spectacle created by an elegantly built candy buffet also provides a delicious backdrop for wedding cakes (and makes for gorgeous photos) and is an unexpected treat for your guests.

### *1. Pick a Theme and Colour*

Candy buffets are all the rage in Baby Showers, Weddings, Birthdays, etc. They are taking the place of giving out traditional party favors. They are interactive, fun and a definite wow factor to the decor of any party. The first thing to do when deciding on a theme is pick your printables first. That way I can design everything else around those colors. For example: If you are doing a girls first birthday you may pick a light pink and white colour palette for the candy and the table's decor elements. Click the appropriate link to find your printables on our page.

### *2. Selecting Candy Type and Flavours*

There are so many types of candy to choose from. To make it easier, separate candy into 4 categories:

Bulk loose candy: sold by the pound or kilogram

Individually packaged candy: offer one per guest

Designer candy/sweets: offer one per guest

Display candy: used for decoration & filler

I like to use a mix of all 4 types of candy so I can display them in a variety of different containers and to ensure there is one of each of some of the candy for each guest and then bulk loose candy that guests help themselves to a scoop or two and maybe some tongs.

You can pick your lollies and chocolates up locally at designer boutiques, chocolate stores or department stores and supermarkets or order online with shops such as Candy Warehouse. Candy Warehouse has a large resource and have high-quality candy in a wide variety of colors. They even have a handy tool on their website called a Candy Buffet Builder that will allow you to search for candy by a specific type or even more fabulous...by the color you are looking for. This makes this step of picking out the types of candy to match your color-coordinated candy buffet a breeze!

### 3. Set Up Your Table Into 3 Zones

Always set up my table first to see how much space I actually have to work with before I order the candy. This way I can order just the amount of candy I need to fill the containers that can be displayed on a 6 (for smaller events as shown here) or 8 (for larger events) table without having to refill it. When doing a color coordinated candy table, always use clear containers so the color of the candy shows through. Remember to use containers that will properly display the types of candy you chose in Step 2. If you offer bulk loose candy, be sure that you use containers with a large enough opening for a scoop to fit in and short enough that guests can actually reach to the bottom. If after setting up your table, you may realize you don't have enough space to display 100 individually packaged candy like swirl lollipops for example, you will have to adjust your choices to include more bulk candy instead that can be displayed in one large jar which takes up less table space.

Setup your table in 3 zones!

Divide your table into 3 horizontal zones and use height appropriate containers in each zone.

Back Zone: Use taller containers or use photo boxes or glass jars to elevate your containers in this zone. Make sure the containers are not too tall so your guests can reach the candy inside them and avoid tipping them over. Test this in advance to avoid this. I used sixlets in the bottoms of the 4 stemmed hurricanes to make the rock candy sticks sit higher in the container so they are easier for guests to get to. I also used 2 glass jars with lids to hold the marshmallow poles in this zone but had the containers lowers to allow for better reach.

TIP: I don't use bulk candy containers in this zone because it is difficult to reach and scoop out bulk candy in tall containers at the back of the table especially when the candy starts to get low.

Middle Zone: The middle area of the table is where I display bulk candy in 2 sets of apothecary jars to balance the table design with 3 jars on each side of the table for a more balanced look. Using 6 jars allows you to display a lot of candy here without taking up too much of the table space. In this zone I used 6 apothecary jars to hold all the bulk candy—m&m's, gum balls and chocolate balls. Apothecary jars are some of my favorite containers to display candy. Jars can either be purchased at local department stores or online or alternatively hired from your local party hire shop or wedding hire shop. If purchasing jars, ensure to get a wide variety of unique designs, taking into account their base and how much room they will take up on the table. Apothecary jars are affordable and a must-have in your collection as they hold lots of bulk candy, can be used in almost all party themes and weddings and take up minimal table space.

TIP: For larger guest counts (50 or more), I suggest having at least 12 large vessels to hold bulk candy which serves more people with minimal table space.

Front Zone: The front of the table is where I use trays or shorter containers to display individually portioned items like cotton candy bags, ribbon candy, swirl lollipops and jumbo marshmallows embellished with Sparkle Sticks!

TIP: To display swirl lollipops, re-use the cardboard trays that the swirl lollipops were shipped in by wrapping them with paper, embellish with a ribbon and printable circle, then reinsert the lollipops into the pre-punched holes.

## 4. How Much Candy

As a general rule of thumb is to purchase about 200g or 8 ounces of candy per guest. The candy table above is setup for 24 guests. Therefore you would need approx 192 ounces/ 15 lbs of candy. For larger guest counts order more bulk candy and less individually portioned items.

For individually packaged candy, always order one per guest, that part is easy! But what do you do when you go to order loose candy and it's all sold by the pound? How do you figure out how much 10 lbs of jelly beans actually looks like and would it be enough to fill one or more of your apothecary jars? Here's a breakdown of the candy used on this table below

Bulk loose candy: M&M's, gumballs, puffy poles jumbo marshmallow twists, foil wrapped chocolate balls

Individually packaged candy: swirl lollipops, rock candy sticks, cotton candy

Designer candy: ribbon candy, jumbo marshmallows

Display candy: sixlets sugar candy beads, jelly beans

## 5. Wow Factor and Centre Pieces

When your guests enter your party space, the candy buffet should be a WOW-FACTOR! The first things they will see is the tablecloth, backdrop & centerpiece.

Matching backdrop: You can order a backdrop online or pick up some material to the correct dimensions at your local craft or sewing store. Alternatively balloons make a sensational backdrop and are also inexpensive. Simply use a curtain rod or fishing line (depending on the weight of the material used) to hang your backdrop. Make sure your backdrop suits the theme and colour scheme selected back at step 1.

Show-stopper table linen: Again pick up some material at your local craft supply store that suits your theme and use it as a table cloth. You can also pick up a cheap table runner to add extra dimension to your candy buffet. Material comes in many colours and textures sure to suit any theme you have for your event. Also note, that the table cloth will actually be one of the first things guests see due to its large surface area, make sure it looks the part.

Themed centerpiece: The centerpiece should be one of the first things people will see on your table, so make sure it is fabulous and matches your party's theme. In the photo above, the signature "bling bear" cupcake tower centerpieces are a super cute way to bring a girly baby shower theme to the table. To add the needed height to the centerpieces, use clear acrylic plates and tubes from your local craft store to showcase the bears high above the table to ensure it is visually powerful. The bears are dressed in rhinestone studded "baby girl" t-shirts, pink bows and are holding silver rattles and crystal pacifiers. So posh! The cupcake tower gives the middle of the table height and is a great way to add additional sweets to your table.

## 6. Signage

Your guests are going to want to know what tasty desserts they can choose from! Make sure to clearly mark the desserts with place cards or other simple DIY signage.

## 7. Finishing Touches

Adding the details! Once you have all the candy to match your color palette, the last thing to do is add all the finishing touches to enhance the theme of the table.

### Add a little bling!

What is a girly candy table without a little bling! These fabulous bling tongs & scoops from Talia's Creative Printing adds just that bit of sparkle detailing that will have your guests talking! The bling Sparkle Sticks™ from Made By A Princess is the perfect addition to really glam up simple jumbo marshmallows!

### Embellish with bows & ribbon!

Glam up the candy and containers with bows and ribbon. Here I added black ribbon to the swirl lollipops and decorated their display cartons with wrapping paper, ribbon and printable circle.

### Decorate with candy!

Use candy as more than just an item to eat but also an item to decorate with. For example in the above baby shower candy buffet, the word baby is spelt in ceramic containers filled with lollies.

TIP: For baby showers and birthdays, use mason jars of candy as game prizes. Simply fill them with jelly beans, place a stick with a printable down in them and place them on your table to add a decorative element to the table until game time. Also remember that candy buffets dont just need to consist of candy; you can also add some savoury items or some little cakes and cookies. Download our recipe book for some quick and easy ideas for your next celebration.

