



Mastering the Chain Hotel Breakfast Buffet: Your Guide to Staying on Track

Waking up to a hotel's complimentary breakfast buffet might feel like hitting the jackpot—endless options, all at your fingertips. But before you pile your plate high, remember that these buffets can be a minefield of unhealthy choices. The good news? With a bit of strategy, you can navigate the spread and stick to your health goals without missing out.

Hot Food: Start your morning with real, wholesome options. Think hearty oatmeal, fluffy scrambled eggs, or simple breakfast potatoes. But beware of the traps—anything deep-fried, swimming in grease, or overloaded with cheese should stay on the sidelines. Breakfast meats like bacon and sausage? Skip them; they're not doing your health any favors. Pancakes and waffles may look like breakfast, but let's be honest—they're dessert in disguise. If you can't resist, keep it to a small portion and balance it out with fresh fruit and other healthier picks.

Cereal: When it comes to cold cereal, go for the champions of the breakfast aisle—high in fiber and low in sugar. Muesli, bran flakes, or regular Cheerios are solid choices. Granola, while delicious and a source of whole grain, is often packed with added fat and sugar, so treat it like a garnish, not the main event. For hot cereal, seek out plain oatmeal (often served from a big, steamy pot). Skip the instant packets—they're sugar bombs. Instead, top your plain oats with nuts, dried or fresh fruit, or a spoonful of peanut butter for a satisfying, nutrient-packed meal.

Cold Food: Keep it simple with hard-boiled eggs and fresh fruit. They're easy, nutritious, and satisfying. Plain yogurt (unsweetened) is another great choice. Skip the cheese and sugary canned fruits.

Bakery: The bakery section can be a danger zone, but there may be gems in the mix. Whole wheat bread and whole grain English muffins are your go-to's. Swap the jelly/jam, butter and cream cheese for peanut butter, which is packed with nutrients and will keep you fuller longer. Bagels, muffins (yes, even bran muffins), and pastries may look tempting, but they're best left behind—they're just empty calories waiting to derail your day.

Beverages: When it comes to drinks, keep it simple and stay hydrated. Water, on ice or hot with lemon, is always a winner, but if you need a little pick-me-up, coffee or tea are your best bets—just skip the sugary creamers and syrups. If you're in the mood for juice, opt for a small glass of 100% fruit juice, but remember, whole fruit is always a better option because it's packed with fiber and less concentrated in sugar. Avoid sugary drinks like flavored milks, hot chocolate, and juice cocktails—they'll give you a quick energy spike followed by a crash.

Top Picks:

- Oatmeal topped with fresh fruits, raisins, and sliced almonds
- Apple with peanut butter and a side of plain yogurt
- Whole wheat English muffin with peanut butter and sliced banana
- Whole wheat toast topped with scrambled or sliced hard-boiled egg, plus a side of fresh fruit

With a little know-how, you can conquer the chain hotel breakfast buffet like a pro. Stay mindful, make smart choices, and you'll start your day feeling energized and ready to take on whatever comes your way.

Overnight Banana Peanut Butter Chia Breakfast Pudding



This is a great breakfast go-to whether you're home or traveling (and the perfect way to use those bananas you meant to snack on but got too ripe) – as long as your room has a fridge!

Ingredients:

- 2 large very ripe bananas (about a cup mashed)
- 2 tbsp smooth peanut butter
- 1/3 cup chia seeds
- 2 cups unsweetened plant milk
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract (if you have it - optional)

Directions:

In a large mug or bowl, mash bananas with a fork. Add peanut butter and chia seeds and stir until well-blended. Then add milk and (optional) vanilla, and stir very well.

Let sit for about a half hour, and stir well again.

Cover and refrigerate for another 30 minutes, and give it one more stir. Let sit overnight (at least 6 hours).

When ready to eat, give a stir and feel free to add your favorite healthy toppings, like unsweetened coconut flakes, fresh chopped fruit, dried fruit, nuts, or cacao nibs.