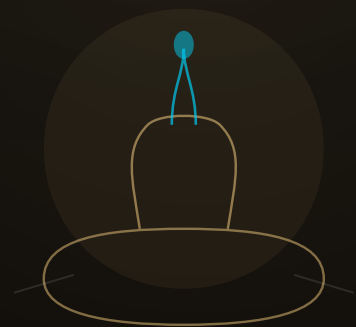


Weddings

without damage

A private guide to navigating multi-day Indian celebrations, wedding buffets, and family feasts without metabolic regression.



A Different Kind Of Table

A wedding is not a restaurant. Nobody is coming to your table to take a modified order, and the spread is often the same for three or four days running. The strategy here isn't "ask the kitchen": it's selection, sequencing, and portion, applied on repeat.

Everything in this guide assumes the same broader, livable ketogenic framework as the rest of your Superhuman resources: protein and natural fat doing most of the work, vegetables allowed freely, and refined sugar, maida, and rice treated as the real threat. What's different here is the environment: a buffet you can't customise, a family that measures love in second helpings, and an event that may run across four functions in five days.

The goal across a wedding season is not a perfect plate at every function. It's finishing the week having actually enjoyed the celebration, without the two or three days of bloating, cravings, and blood sugar swings that usually follow one. That's a matter of which counters you build your plate from, not how much willpower you can sustain over four nights.

Read the non-negotiables once before the wedding season starts. Everything after that is reference: dip into whichever counter you're standing in front of.

Six Non-Negotiables

These six habits do more work across a wedding season than any amount of willpower at the table. Learn them once, apply them at every function.

01 **RECON BEFORE YOU PLATE**

Walk the entire spread once, empty-handed, before you serve yourself anything. You cannot make a good decision about counter three if you've already filled up on counter one.

02 **PROTEIN AND VEGETABLES CLAIM THE PLATE FIRST**

Physically fill two-thirds of the plate with tandoori protein, curry, and sabzi before rice, naan, or kulcha get any real estate. Whatever's left is what you're allowed for the rest.

03 **ONE PLATE, NOT THREE**

If you want more after the first plate, go back for more protein and salad: never a second helping of rice, bread, or curry built the same way.

04 **THE SWEETS TABLE GETS A TASTE, NOT A PORTION**

One or two small bites of whatever you actually want, eaten slowly. Not a plated serving of three different mithai "since it's a wedding."

05 **BUDGET YOUR ALCOHOL BEFORE THE NIGHT STARTS**

Decide what you're drinking before the bar opens. Spirits with soda or water, paced with an equal number of glasses of plain water in between.

06 **DECLINE IS A COMPLETE SENTENCE**

You do not owe anyone an explanation for what's on your plate. The scripts later in this guide exist so a firm "no, thank you" never has to feel like a confrontation with an aunty.

Welcome Drinks & Starters

The welcome counter sets the tone for the whole evening, and it's usually the single sweetest thing you'll be handed all night, before you've even reached the main spread.

● ORDER THIS

Plain water, soda, or a spirit from the welcome counter instead of the signature mocktail.

Tandoori or grilled starters (paneer tikka, tandoori chicken, seekh kebab, fish tikka) straight off a live grill counter.

Soup, if a clear or tomato-based one is offered, in place of a fried starter.

Salad and raita counters, usually under-visited and genuinely useful.

● SKIP THIS

Thandai, aam panna, and signature "welcome" mocktails: traditionally built on a heavy sugar syrup and dried fruit paste base, these can carry as much sugar as a mango lassi in a single glass.

Fried starters (pakoras, spring rolls, cheese balls, crispy corn) sitting under a heat lamp by the dozen.

Papdi and other fried-base canapes passed around on trays before the main counters even open.

HIDDEN TRAP

The signature welcome drink is handed to you before you've decided anything: by the time you reach the actual buffet, you may have already had 25–30g of sugar and eaten nothing. Take it, thank the host, and set it down after one sip if you don't intend to finish it.

SAY THIS

"Could I get a soda water or a whisky soda instead of the welcome drink, please?"

The Vegetarian Spread

The vegetarian counter at an Indian wedding has some of the best options on the entire buffet, and some of the most disguised: the healthiest-looking gravies are often the richest.

● ORDER THIS

Paneer tikka and tandoori vegetables straight off the grill counter.

Dry sabzi, bhindi, tori, lauki, dry aloo, genuinely lower-carb than any of the gravies.

Dal, any variety, in a moderate portion: dal tadka and dal fry are lighter than dal makhani.

The salad and raita counter, usually adjacent to the mains.

● SKIP THIS

Shahi paneer, malai kofta, paneer butter masala: cream, cashew paste, and often sugar, on top of an otherwise fine protein.

Dal makhani: a single cup carries roughly **24–30g of carbohydrate** and is routinely finished with cream and a spoon of sugar.

Veg biryani, jeera rice, pulao: the rice counter is the same trap whether it says "veg" on the label or not.

Butter naan, stuffed kulcha, poori: a single butter naan runs close to 45g of carbs before the butter is counted.

HIDDEN TRAP

The vegetarian counter is where most people over-eat carbohydrate without realising it, on the assumption that "vegetarian" means "light." Malai kofta and shahi paneer are frequently richer, gram for gram, than the non-vegetarian curries beside them.

IF YOU'RE ASKING A SERVER

"Could I get a bit more of the dry sabzi and dal, and just a small spoon of the paneer, no rice or naan on this plate please?"

The Non-Vegetarian Spread

This is usually the strongest counter on the whole buffet for you: grilled and curried protein, largely untouched by the carbohydrate problems everywhere else on the table.

● ORDER THIS

Tandoori chicken, chicken tikka, fish tikka: the live grill counter, if there is one, is almost always your best option at the entire wedding.

Plain chicken curry or egg curry, taken in a normal gravy portion rather than heaped.

Clear soup or a broth-based starter, if offered, before the mains.

Grilled fish, wherever it appears on the counter.

● SKIP THIS

Butter chicken and chicken korma: cream- and cashew-based gravies with meaningful added sugar.

Mutton curry in a rich gravy, and any "creamy" labeled non-veg dish.

Biryani: the single biggest carbohydrate item at most weddings; the rice alone can carry well over 60g of carbs per plate before the meat is counted.

Fried chicken and fried fish starters.

HIDDEN TRAP

Biryani at a wedding is served from a single enormous pot, which means portion control is entirely on you: there's no "small size." If you want the flavour, take a small spoonful mixed through your plate rather than a full serving spooned separately.

SAY THIS

"Just the tandoori chicken and a little of the curry please, no rice on this plate."

Chaat & Live Counters

Live counters are built for grazing, which is exactly what makes them dangerous: a "just one golgappe" habit at a five-hour wedding adds up to a full meal's worth of refined carbohydrate without ever feeling like one.

● ORDER THIS

Live tandoor or kebab counters: the same logic as the main non-veg spread, made fresh in front of you.

Live egg or omelette counters, where offered at a breakfast or brunch function.

A single small taste of a chaat item, eaten slowly and deliberately, rather than a full plate.

● SKIP THIS

Golgappe / pani puri: a standard plate of six carries roughly **30g of carbohydrate** from the fried puri shells, plus another **15g of sugar** from the sweetened tamarind water, before you count a second helping.

Aloo tikki chaat, raj kachori, dahi bhalla: fried bases, sweetened yoghurt, and tamarind chutney stacked together.

Live pasta and Chinese counters: a wedding staple, and just as carb-dense as any restaurant version.

HIDDEN TRAP

Chaat counters are designed for repeat visits across the evening: most guests don't register "I've had four rounds of golgappe" as a meal, because each visit feels small. Treat the chaat counter as a single stop, not a running snack.

SAY THIS

"Just a couple please, and could I get the pani on the side rather than filled all the way?"

The Sweets Table

Not all mithai are made equal: some are considerably better defaults than others, and knowing which is which lets you actually enjoy the table instead of avoiding it entirely.

● BETTER DEFAULTS

Rasgulla or sandesh, one piece: poached rather than fried, roughly a third of the calorie density of jalebi gram for gram.

Kheer or phirni, a small spoon rather than a full bowl.

Kulfi, half a stick: dense but at least dairy-based rather than pure fried syrup.

Fresh fruit, if a fruit counter is on offer alongside the mithai.

● TREAT AS A SPLURGE

Gulab jamun: one piece carries roughly **20–25g of carbohydrate** and 8–10g of sugar, almost entirely from the soaking syrup.

Jalebi: deep-fried and syrup-soaked; gram for gram it carries nearly three times the calorie density of rasgulla.

Besan and moong dal laddoo, gajar halwa, rabri: ghee, sugar, and khoya in heavy concentration.

Kaju katli and other barfi: dense sugar and nut paste with very little water content to dilute it.

HIDDEN TRAP

"I'll just have a small piece" rarely survives contact with a wedding sweets table that has eight counters on it. Decide which one or two mithai you actually want before you reach the table, and walk past the rest: the goal is enjoying dessert, not sampling the whole spread.

SAY THIS

"Just one rasgulla for me, thank you: I'm keeping it light tonight."

The Bar

A multi-day wedding usually means a bar open for four or five nights running: the difference between finishing the week fine and finishing it wrecked is almost entirely about what's in the glass, not how many.

● ORDER THIS

Whisky, vodka, gin, or rum with soda or water: the standard order at most Indian weddings, and the safest by far.

Dry red or white wine, or a brut/dry champagne for the toast: under 2g of carbs in a standard glass.

A glass of plain water between every drink: this alone does more for how you feel the next morning than any single food choice at the event.

● SKIP THIS

Beer: 10–15g of carbs per bottle, and rarely just one across a long evening.

Sweet cocktails and premixed drinks served at the bar counter: the same syrup-and-juice base as any restaurant cocktail.

Sweet or demi-sec sparkling wine poured for a toast: ask for the dry option if both are available.

HIDDEN TRAP

Across a four- or five-function wedding, the cumulative effect of drinking every night is almost always bigger than any single night's choices. Decide in advance which one or two functions are your "drinking nights" and which are water-and-soda nights: don't leave that decision to whoever's pouring.

SAY THIS

"A whisky soda for me, please: and could I get a glass of water alongside it?"

The Multi-Day Event

A wedding season is rarely one meal: it's a haldi, a mehndi, a sangeet, the wedding itself, and a reception, often inside a single week. Treating every function like it's the only one is how the week gets away from you.

● DO THIS

Pick one function to genuinely splurge at (usually the main wedding or reception) and treat the others as the "protein first, one plate" default.

Eat a real, protein-forward meal before you leave for each function: arriving hungry is the single biggest predictor of over-eating at the buffet.

Hydrate deliberately the morning after a heavy or salty function: water and electrolytes, not just coffee.

Default to eggs and protein at the next morning's breakfast, regardless of what the hotel or family spread looks like: see the Breakfast and Hotels sections of the Dining Without Damage guide.

● WATCH FOR

"It's a wedding" as a justification applied to every single function rather than one or two.

Skipping meals earlier in the day to "save room" for the function: this reliably backfires into over-eating once you arrive.

Daytime functions (haldi, mehndi) that quietly involve as much snacking and sweets as the main event, just spread across more hours.

HIDDEN TRAP

Haldi and mehndi functions feel casual, which makes people treat them as calorie-free: in practice they often run four or five hours with a snack and chaat counter open the entire time, adding up to more than the formal dinner that follows two nights later.

THE REAL FIX

"Before the wedding season starts, decide out loud (even just to yourself) which function is your splurge night. Everything else defaults to the six non-negotiables at the front of this guide."

Family & Social Pressure

The hardest part of eating well at an Indian wedding is rarely the buffet: it's the aunty serving your plate for you, or the uncle who takes a second helping as a personal offense if you don't join him.

● DO THIS

Serve your **own plate first**, before anyone else has the chance to build it for you.

Keep a **warm, short, non-negotiable response** ready rather than improvising an explanation in the moment: the scripts below are designed to end the conversation kindly.

Redirect with a compliment: praising the host's food is usually enough to satisfy the person pushing more of it on you.

Let one relative's opinion be exactly that: an opinion, not a decision you owe them.

● WATCH FOR

"You've become so thin, eat something": a common opener that has nothing to do with the actual food in front of you.

Being served directly onto your plate before you've had a chance to decline.

Guilt framed as love: "I made this specially" is a real pressure point; a small taste plus genuine praise usually resolves it without a full portion.

HIDDEN TRAP

Over-explaining why you're not eating something invites debate. A short, warm, unqualified answer ends the conversation; a long justification about diets and carbs invites everyone at the table to have an opinion about it.

SAY THIS

"It looks wonderful, I've already got a full plate: thank you though. I'll come find you for seconds if I want more."

QUICK REFERENCE

The One-Page Recap

Everything above, condensed. Read this in the car on the way to the function if you don't have time for anything else.

COUNTER	DEFAULT TO	DECLINE BY DEFAULT
Welcome / Starters	Water or spirit, tandoori/grilled starters, soup, salad	Thandai/mocktails, fried starters, papdi canapes
Vegetarian Spread	Paneer tikka, tandoori veg, dry sabzi, dal (moderate)	Shahi paneer, malai kofta, dal makhani, naan, veg biryani
Non-Veg Spread	Tandoori chicken/fish, plain curry, clear soup	Butter chicken, korma, rich mutton curry, biryani
Chaat / Live	Live tandoor/kebab, one small taste, pani on the side	Golgappe rounds, tikki chaat, raj kachori, live pasta/Chinese
Sweets Table	Rasgulla, sandesh, small kheer, half a kulfi	Gulab jamun, jalebi, laddoo, halwa, kaju katli: as a splurge only
The Bar	Spirit + soda/water, dry wine, brut champagne, water between	Beer, sweet cocktails, demi-sec sparkling wine
Multi-Day Pacing	One splurge function, protein before you leave, hydrate after	Treating every function as the splurge, skipping meals to "save room"
Family Pressure	Serve your own plate, short warm decline, redirect with a compliment	Over-explaining, letting others plate your food, guilt-eating "specially made" dishes

Figures referenced throughout this guide are typical ranges drawn from standard nutrition data for these dishes: always variable by kitchen, caterer, and portion. When in doubt, ask, or simply take less.



Enjoy the wedding.

This guide exists so the celebration doesn't cost you the progress you've made. Questions about a specific event between sessions: reach out directly, we'll plan around it together.

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