

EVENT CATERING BASICS

This is designed to help you consider all your catering options. Paying attention to the little details is very important to planning an exceptional event.

Many factors should be weighed when deciding on the right amount of food for your event. Of course, first you must know **the number of people** attending. However, the **length of the event** is also very important, as is the **type of event** and the **type of food** you plan to serve.

For example, an evening cocktail party requires considerably less food than an entire afternoon or all-day event. **The longer guests remain, the more they'll consume.** It's funny, but over time people get hungry and thirsty over and over again.

When estimating, always round up to be on the safe side. Some will eat more, others less. It will all balance out in the end. Try to anticipate which foods/drinks are most popular and will disappear quickly. Order more of these selections.

Here is a basic list of things to consider before meeting with any caterer:

- ✓ Determine your budget
- ✓ Make your guest list—this will help estimate your costs once you have chosen your menu
- ✓ Pick a location
- ✓ Set the date and time of the event
- ✓ Do your guests have any food allergies or dietary restrictions?

SEATING

- **Seated Meal**—works well at formal events such as weddings, galas, or where a presentation is being made
- **Standing Reception**—works well for events with limited space, a short event time, or where you want to encourage mingling or networking. Consider having your guests stand and place some cabaret tables around the room as places to rest drinks.
- **Partial Seating**—works well when your guest list includes a mixed age group or may extend for a length of time.

FOOD PRESENTATION METHODS

- **Passed hors d'Oeuvres**—This option works for every event. Either as a pre-meal appetizer or as the sole service of the party, they are easy to hold in your hand, offer variety in the menu and are easy to serve. However, keep in mind that it takes wait staff to pass the hors d'oeuvres, which will increase your overall personnel costs.
- **Stationary hors d'Oeuvres**—Works well for open houses, auctions, or receptions where guests arrive intermittently or move around within the event area.
- **Buffet**—A popular service choice and familiar to everyone. This option helps keep personnel costs in line and is a good venue for offering a variety of menu choices.
- **Seated Meal**—A wait staff serves a plated meal to each individual diner

BAR FEATURES

- **Dry Bar**—If you have a budget-conscious event, eliminating alcohol completely will help with the expenses. You can possibly consider a specialty non-alcoholic drink if you want something other than the usual water, iced tea and/or coffee.
- **Beer & Wine**—Variety is the spice of life except when you're waiting in line at the bar. Offering beer and wine as the only alcoholic options is cost-effective and keeps the bar line moving.
- **Full Bar**—A special day deserves the best. Events with large crowds or gatherings may call for a bar with full options for mixed drinks. If you want to serve a specialty drink that requires additional mixes, this will add to the cost, so keep that in mind.

FOOD & BEVERAGE QUANTITIES

Meal	Hors d'Oeuvres	Drinks
Breakfast	none necessary	2 per guest
Lunch	1-4 per guest	2 per guest
Dinner	4-8 per guest	2 to 3 per guest
Hors d'oeuvres only (no dinner following)	6-12 per guest	2 to 3 per guest

