

# CATERING WORKSHEET

## Vendor Information

Name of caterer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact person \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Alternate contact \_\_\_\_\_  
 Alternate phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 "Day of" phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Banquet captain \_\_\_\_\_

## Things to ask:

Cancellation policy Yes  No   
 Deposit required Yes  No   
 Deposit due date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
 Insurance certificate Yes  No   
 Liquor license Yes  No   
 Service rate (gratuity) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tax rate \_\_\_\_\_  
 Overage percentage \_\_\_\_\_

## Checklist

	Completed	Date
Choose dining format (reception, dinner, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Estimate guest count	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Get estimate/proposals	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Choose caterer	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Ensure caterer has adequate insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Establish purchase order/PAC #	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Set up tasting	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Choose menus	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Contract signed	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Deposit paid	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$..... ___/___/___
Finalize menus	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Discuss special menu needs (kosher, low fat, vegetarian)	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Head count guarantee/seating	<input type="checkbox"/>	___/___/___
Grand total	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$..... ___/___/___
Balance paid	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$..... ___/___/___

## Notes/Suggestions

### Catering/menu/contract details

- Read BEO (banquet event order) carefully to ensure it reflects all details of your order, including date of event, timing of service, deposit requirements, billing, cancellation policies and gratuity percentage.
- Food prices are often quoted "plus plus" – the service and the sales tax – meaning those figures are not calculated in the price per person and must be added in to the overall cost.
- When you provide the catering guarantee, be conservative. The average no-show rate is 10%.
- Most caterers build a plus-or-minus percentage overage (often 3-5%) into the guarantee.
- Give banquet manager a copy of your program and walk through the timing with them.

### Menu planning

- Provide a variety of foods, and always offer vegetarian/healthy selections. Be mindful of possible allergies and offer options.
- Be mindful of cultural preferences for international guests.
- When serving sodas, offer regular, diet, and caffeine-free. For coffee service, provide 70% regular and 30% decaffeinated.
- Make sure hors d'oeuvres or finger foods can be eaten in one or two bites easily, or ask for mini versions.
- Make sure eating utensils are provided when appropriate – some guests prefer to eat even finger foods with utensils
- Do not trim budgets by reducing the quality of the food or number of wait staff – instead consider alternatives to expensive items.
- For pre-meal cocktail hours, four to six hors d'oeuvres per person per hour is adequate. For receptions, plan on five to seven pieces per person per hour, plus a stationary display or two. For each subsequent hour, decrease the number of pieces.

### Alcohol

- If admission fees or money is exchanged at an event, even a tip cup, the personnel pouring the alcohol must have a liquor license.
- Offer both white and red wine.
- Generally allow 2.5 glasses of wine per person. On average, there are 5 glasses in a bottle and 12 bottles in a case.
- If the liquor vendor allows unopened wine to be returned, ask for a cork or bottle count to double check overage at end of the event.
- If students are attending an event where alcohol is served, plan to check identification at bars.
- Always serve food when alcohol is served, but be mindful of what is served – salty snack foods encourage dehydration.
- Give wait staff authority to cut off inebriated guests and have taxi phone numbers as a back up.

### Staffing guidelines

- Need one bartender for every 75 to 100 people.
- Need one server for every 15 people for sit-down meal (if quick service is required, pay extra for one server for every 10).

### Setup/service

- Need one double-sided buffet line for every 75 to 100 people.
- Have beverage service ready 30 minutes prior to the start of event, with food ready 15 minutes prior, to avoid quality deterioration.
- Recommend no catering service during your program – if appropriate, have wait staff leave carafes of coffee or beverage on tables.
- Check caterer's kitchen and water requirements to verify venue has facilities and can accommodate – may need to modify menu.