SALTHOUSE ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT CATERING
(GENERAL INFO, STYLE OF FOOD SERVICE, PRICING ESTIMATES, EVENT INSURANCE AND MORE)

• What do I need to know before calling about catering?
You should know the purpose of the event, the date, location, estimated number of guests, event start and end
time and a general budget to help us guide you through options. It is also helpful to advise on any allergies with
bride, groom, immediate family, or important guests.

• What are the different types of food service I could consider for my event? We offer several types of food
service (consider group size and venue logistics to help decide which is right for your event):

Passed Hors d’oeuvres – servers offer tray passed canapes (small, 1-2 bite appetizer) to guests as they mingle and enjoy
beverages. It’s typical to offer passed hors d’oeuvres for a pre-dinner cocktail hour. You can offer a passed appetizer
only menu in an appropriate setting (with limited space such as art gallery or retail location) for a relatively short event
(2 hrs or less). Guest seating is not required.

Cocktail Hour/Appetizer/Hors d’oeuvres Stations - Cocktail hour hors d’oeuvres displays such as a raw bar or appetizer
stations are an option to consider in addition to passed appetizers for the time from guest arrival until dinner is served.
These are also a great, eye-catching centerpiece to a cocktail party. Displays offer plenty of versatility when it comes to
dietary restrictions if you might not be aware of potential dietary restrictions among guests, or if you are just looking for
a more variety in general.

Buffet – all food is on one long buffet with dinner plates. Menu items should pair well with each other to form a
cohesive plate for guests to enjoy. A typical buffet menu includes a salad, a vegetable, a starch, 2 proteins and bread.
Guests go through the buffet line and sit down to eat at the same time. It is best to release tables for this style of service
to help control the pace of service and prevent large lines. Full guest seating is typical with set flatware, linen napkin and
water glass. If the event is less formal, flatware roll-ups (linen napkin, and flatware) can be placed on the buffet with the
dinner plate for guests to take as they make their way through the buffet.

Heavy Hors d’oeuvres or Dinner Stations – multiple food stations scattered around. Combination of self service and
chef attended stations offering small/tasting plates or “mini meals” (think tapas style) at each station. This type of
service offers greater variety in food selections. Depending on your group size, 3 to 4 stations can serve as dinner. This
service style is a more social design. We also suggest this if the space might be small or the guest count, as full seating is
not required, and plates can easily be enjoyed by guests standing at a cocktail table.

Family Style - Guests are all seated with full place setting. First course can be pre-set, served or included in family style
service. Servers present bowls or platters of proteins paired with sides to table asking guests to “serve yourself and pass
it around”. This is a communal style of service, allowing good variety of food items. Guests are able to choose and
serve the items they prefer. When selecting proteins, we suggest items that are a clear individual serving, such as a
Petite Filet, or Airline Chicken Breast, rather than sliced options like Pork Loin, or Flank Steak that can leave guests
unsure of how much to serve themselves. This helps to deter overservice. Additional rental needs (platters, bowls,
utensils are required for service. Table set up should also allow for space to place vessels when served.

Plated/Seated Served Dinner- Guests are all seated and we serve their dinner to the tables. Tables are pre-set with a
bread basket, flatware, napkin and water glass). Typical two course meal offers a plated salad or starter course and an
entrée. Consider the option to serve wine to the tables with dinner or let guests help themselves from the bar(s).
Entrees for plated service can be handled a few ways:

1) Everyone eats the same entrée. This can be a single protein entrée or a split plate/dual entrée (like a surf and turf). Vegetarian or modified entrees are available for those with dietary restrictions. This tends to be a faster style of service and requires less labor.

2) Advance choice of entrée: Host chooses a max of 3 entrees with the same sides (2 protein and 1 veg). Guests are given options on the invitation to reply with their choice of entrée. Host must provide final count of guest selections, and any dietary restriction information, as well as a layout showing where each person is sitting (i.e. assigned tables and seats), and an entrée coded place card per place setting. Additional labor is required to appropriately handle this type of service.

** There are scenarios for combined styles of service. An example would be – 100% seating for guests with a plated first course followed by a station style dinner or dinner buffet.

Allow us to customize a menu that meets your needs, tastes, venue and budgetary guidelines.

- How will the event location affect the catering for my event? We like to know where you’re hosting your party so we can quote according to what they have or don’t have on site for food service. Some spaces have a full kitchen while others have nothing. We need a covered, lit space with power to service your event appropriately. Depending on your menu, rental ovens or other equipment may be needed to properly heat and serve the food. There are also potential impact fees that can range from 5-15% of food and beverage costs that could be applicable depending on your venue selection. Knowing the venue helps us to create proposals with accurate bottom line pricing.

- How much is it going to cost me to cater my event? There are so many factors that go into pricing your specific event (number of guests, location, duration, style of service, labor needs, food and beverage choices, etc) which is why we like to prepare a customized estimate for you based on YOUR event details.

The average catering cost (per person) for most full service weddings starts around $120 per person (pp) inclusive of food, bar/beverages, set up (food tables, serving equipment, utensils, kitchen related equipment) service rentals (glassware, china, flatware) labor, delivery, tax.

b) Bar Package: $15-$40 pp depending on duration and type of package
c) Service Charge: 20% service on food and beverage totals
d) Sales tax: 11% on all food and beverage (9% state tax + 2% City of Chas hospitality tax), 9% on labor and equipment
e) Rentals: approx. $20-$40 pp for china, flatware, glassware, buffet table & linen rental
f) Service/Buffet Set up: $75-300 includes all trays, platters, utensils, chafers, cocktail napkins, trash bags, percolator, pitchers and EVERYTHING needed for serving the food.
g) Delivery: $100 local (transport, gas, insurance)
h) Mobile Kitchen Set up (venue dependent): $1,000-1,750 including tent, lights, tables, walls and rental convection oven. Some venues will n
i) Chef Attendants & Bartenders: $175-300 per based on duration of bar
j) Other fees:
   - venue catering fee (some spaces charge 5%-15% of food and bev)
   - additional labor: dependent on event duration, style of service, travel costs, etc.
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• **What aspects of my event will you handle?** We are happy to coordinate rentals for food and beverage service to include china, flatware, glassware, buffet tables and linens. If you are working with a planner, we will work closely with them to provide the details of what we need for service and help them manage that order to streamline this service and minimize delivery costs. We own everything needed for service (like platters, chafers, service utensils, etc.), so this is not added to your rental order, but charged as a set up fee. We can coordinate your bar/beverage service to include specialty drinks, cold beverage stations, coffee service and more. We will ask about the timeline for your event to make sure all food and beverage service is managed accordingly (i.e. passed apps from 6-7pm, buffet opens at 7pm, dessert at 8:30 pm).

• **What other costs do I need to consider?** Depending on the size and scope of your event you may have costs associated with the venue, security, photography, planner, music, décor, flowers, transportation, invitations, tenting, power on site, ceremony rentals, etc.

• **We strongly recommend you retain a seasoned, licensed and insured wedding/event planner** to help create a working budget, make recommendations specific to your event and be on site for event set up, execution and break down. The investment is worthwhile to ensure proper planning and event execution.

• **Wedding/Event cancellation insurance** is strongly recommended, especially during hurricane season in Charleston (*June through November, peaking in August and September*). The premium is surprisingly low to cover your investment should something happen to force you to cancel the wedding. Check out the these company websites for more information:

  Wedsafe [https://www.wedsafe.com/Pages/home.aspx](https://www.wedsafe.com/Pages/home.aspx)

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