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YOUR CATERING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

MENU SELECTION

[Q: Do I have to select one of the menus on your website?](#)

Not at all. We publish menus to provide inspiration for the menu planning process, but we love customizing menus for each event.

[Q: Can you provide special menus and handle food allergies?](#)

Absolutely. Whether it's taking care to avoid specific allergens without compromising quality, or developing a menu to match the theme of your event, we love to get custom! Bring on the menu challenges, and we promise to delight you with our suggestions.

[Q: Will you prepare my favorite recipe?](#)

We are happy to prepare an item for you that is inspired by a recipe you provide to us. Remember that many such recipes aren't designed for the catering environment, so we often have to make adjustments to reflect event logistics. We will make it great, but it may not taste exactly like what you're used to.

Q: Where will my food be prepared?

Just like any fine restaurant, we spend the day in our kitchen doing prep work. Then, we utilize mobile kitchen equipment to cook most of the food for your event on-site, just before it's served to your guests.

Q: May I provide my own food at my event?

We prefer to provide all of the food served at the events we cater, with the exception of a specialty dessert like a wedding cake. We do make limited exceptions to allow third-party food to be included on the menu. In these cases, we require a waiver provision due to our lack of control over the preparation and handling of those items.

Q: When should I schedule a tasting?

We look forward to hosting you for a private tasting to showcase our food and finalize your menu selections. We usually schedule tastings after clients have booked with us, or when only one or two other caterers are still being considered. Tastings are limited to two-to-four guests, depending on the size of the event.

Q: Will I get leftovers?

We always try to pack a nice take-home care package for our clients, who are often too busy visiting with their guests to enjoy the food. We don't pack up all of the food that is remaining at the end of the party, however.

SERVICE STYLE

Q: How do I decide which service style is right for me?

Choosing the way in which food is served to your guests is a personal decision. Whether you envision a formal affair, or a casual party where few guests even sit down, your vision for

the party will guide this choice. [The attached pdf](#) provides some general information. Talk with your Event Designer about which choice is right for you.

Q: What other options are there?

It's your event, so please choose what's right for you and your guests. Here are some twists and turns on the traditional selections:

- A breakfast-for-dinner menu •
- Dessert reception, with sweet specialty drinks and action stations •
- A buffet dinner preceded by a formal seated salad •
- A tasting menu with several served courses in more petite portions •
- A brunch or lunch affair •
- Interactive food stations that allow guests to participate in the preparation of their food •
- Adding a late-night sweet or savory snack to keep the party going •
- Allowing guests to order from menus handed to them by servers during the cocktail hour •

CATERING COSTS

Q: Why is catering so expensive?!

If you've never used a caterer before, the cost can be surprising. Here are some reasons why catering costs more than, for instance, going to a restaurant:

- Menu: caterers have higher food costs than restaurants, because they produce many more menu items that are selected based on client preferences instead of market conditions. •
- Staffing: our staff are 100% dedicated to your event. They start long before the party does and finish well after the guests depart, essentially creating a whole restaurant and then packing it all back up again. •

- Equipment: serving everyone at once requires a lot of service ware and kitchen equipment, and moving it from place to place results in high maintenance and replacement costs.
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- Planning: a well-executed event starts with an amazing event designer and all the time spent planning menus, assisting with vendor coordination, meeting with clients and their teams, and documenting every detail to be sure it all comes off seamlessly on the day of your party. •

Q: How much will my event cost?

Your catering bill usually consists of a few main categories, which we clearly itemize on your proposal

- Menu price (similar to what you'd pay in a restaurant) •
- Beverage service (excluding alcohol) •
- Tableware rentals, including china, flatware and glassware •
- Staff charges, calculated by the hour and tailored to your specific event logistics •
- A vehicle charge •
- An administrative fee, which is a fixed percentage of the entire bill •
- Sales tax •

Q: Do you charge more for weddings, and why?

No, absolutely not. Weddings are more expensive than some other events, because they are generally longer parties and have unique logistics requirements (like setting up a ceremony) that require additional staff.

Q: Why don't you publish your pricing?

Every event is unique. Just a few of the variables that affect pricing are as follows:

- Event venue and location •
- Time of day •
- Length of event •
- Number of guests •
- Service style and service level •

Q: What is the administrative fee?

Most caterers charge an administrative fee, service charge, or other similar fee on their services. This industry-standard charge helps cover the unique costs of “bringing the restaurant to you,” including equipment maintenance and loss, non-billable service time, special kitchen expenses, and so forth.

Q: How do you charge for staff?

Staff are billed by the hour. A small number of staff are charged “portal-to-portal,” which means from the time they arrive at our kitchen to check out the food for your event until they return and unload the truck. Most staff are charged only for the time they are on-site at your occasion. The number of staff assigned to each function depends on the menu, event logistics, and client service expectations.

Q: Is a gratuity for the staff included in the bill?

Gratuities are in the discretion of our clients. We generally recommend that clients tip between \$25 per staff member and 20% of the food and beverage portion of the catering bill (that is, not counting staff charges, rentals, administrative fee, or tax).

Q: Do you charge for cake cutting or corkage fees?

No. Never. You're already paying for the staff, so why would we charge more to have them cut cake or open wine for you?

Q: Do you offer nonprofit or military discounts?

We salute the amazing work nonprofits do in the community and honor the brave service provided by members of the military. You can read more about the many ways we support community organizations [here](#) – including discounts and in-kind contributions. For weddings, we offer a 5% discount off the menu price when one of the couple is active duty military (exclusive of any other promotion/discount).

Q: How do you charge for kids and vendors?

We charge a reduced price and can prepare special menus for kids ages 3-9, and kids under age 3 are free. Vendors are charged just for the entrée. We also offer boxed meals for kids and vendors, because they often need to eat at a specific time.

Q: Are additional costs going to be added to my bill after I book with you?

We don't like surprises any more than you do, so we itemize every charge right from the beginning. There are no hidden charges. Changes to menu, guest count, schedule, etc., will all affect cost. Each time you consider making a change, we'll discuss the budget implications in an effort to help you make good decisions all the way up to the day of your event.

Q: What other event costs should I expect

to incur?

Depending on the type of event you're planning and where it's being held, you may want to budget for the following types of expenses:

- Alcohol •
- Flowers and specialty decor •
- Rentals, which can include a broad variety of items depending on your event, such as tables, chairs, linens, china, flatware, glassware, a stage, pipe and drape, etc. •
- Entertainment (band, DJ, etc.) •
- Lighting •
- Printed invitations •

BEVERAGE SERVICE

Q: Do you serve alcohol?

Colorado law prohibits caterers from selling alcohol to clients. You will have to purchase the alcohol for your event separately, whether it is directly from a licensed event venue or from a liquor store. We are happy to assist with this process.

Q: Are your bartenders licensed?

Colorado doesn't license bartenders, but our management team, event designers, captains, and bartenders receive TIPS training and certification, which is widely recognized as the standard for managing safe alcohol service. We also retain insurance coverage for the service of alcohol, providing an added layer of protection.

Q: Should I shop for my alcohol myself or order it through you?

It's your choice. If you have us order it for you, we can coordinate with the liquor store on quantities, delivery, and

pick-up of returnable leftovers. Most clients prefer this method. You may save money by shopping yourself and selecting sale items, but you generally won't be able to return leftovers and will have to manage the logistics yourself.

Q: What about wine pairings, specialty drinks, and other special requests?

Just ask us! We can help you pair any menu with great wines, come up with exciting themed specialty drinks, and offer tested recipes that feature seasonal ingredients and are designed for catered events.

Q: Can I have a cash bar?

In most cases, only venues with liquor licenses can legally offer cash bars. Nonprofit organizations can apply for special event permits in order to have cash bars.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE STAFF

Q: How do you train your staff?

Occasions Catering has the best staff in the industry, because they're friendly, attentive, and well trained. We built our own rigorous training program and continually develop our team on service, safety, and food knowledge.

Q: How are events staffed?

Each event we plan is staffed according to its unique needs, which determine the number and type of staff positions and the length of each shift. Our staff-to-guest ratio ranges from about 1:10 to 1:35, depending on your needs.

Q: Who will be the Occasions point of contact at my event?

Your friendly service captain will manage the catering execution and supervise the staff. Many times, your event

designer will be there as well, and in any case the designer will be sure you know who's in charge on our end.

Q: What does your staff wear?

Our standard uniform is black dress pants and black shoes, white dress shirt, black necktie, and a gray apron embroidered Occasions Catering logo. We are often asked to vary our uniform according to the tone of the event and are happy to accommodate these requests.

Q: Does your staff set up and break down the event?

Yes! We schedule our staff to allow sufficient time to set up the tables, chairs, linens, tableware, buffets/stations, bars, etc., before the event begins, and then to break all of that down and clean up when the function concludes. With advance planning in place, we are happy to accommodate any special set-up or schedule requirements.

VENUE SELECTION

Q: How do I choose the right venue?

The Denver area is filled with amazing event venues of all sizes and styles. You can view an expansive list of our preferred venues here ([link to venues list](#)). Here are some questions to consider when selecting a function location:

- How many guests am I expecting? •
- Does my venue need to be centrally located? •
- How important is parking? •
- Do I want a venue with a liquor license, or where I can bring in my own alcohol? •
- Does the venue provide rentals, like tables and chairs? •
- How late will my party go, and how loud will it be? •
- Do I need indoor and outdoor spaces? •
- Do I need separate rooms for different activities (bridal suite, breakout discussion room, VIP reception space, etc.)?

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- Are there special audio/visual requirements for my event?
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Q: Should I have my event at my house or office?

Why not? Occasions can help turn any space into the perfect event location, coordinating needed rentals, décor, and other event requirements.

Q: Do you work in the mountains?

Yes. We specialize in bringing the restaurant to you, wherever you are.

PAYMENT POLICIES

Q: How do I reserve my event date?

We require a signed catering agreement and a \$500 non-refundable payment to hold your date.

Q: When is payment due?

Generally, there are three payments due:

- A \$500 payment is due with your signed catering agreement
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- A 60% is due 90 days prior to your event •
- Final payment is due with your guest count guarantee, six business days prior to your event •

Q: What forms of payment do you accept?

We prefer cash or check to keep prices down, but we accept all major credit cards.

Q: When do I have to guarantee my guest count?

Your guarantee is due by 3:00 p.m. six business days prior to your event. After this time, you may not reduce your guest count, and increases may be subject to a modest surcharge to cover associated costs.

Q: What if I have to cancel or reschedule my event?

We recognize that circumstances beyond the host's control sometimes require events to be canceled or rescheduled. Events are usually booked months in advance, and we rely on those bookings to manage our calendar. Our cancellation policy is as follows:

- The \$500 save-the-date payment is not refundable •
- If you cancel within 90 days of the function, 60% of the total balance is payable as a cancellation fee. •
- If you cancel within one week of the event, the full contract amount is due. •
- We try to accommodate rescheduling in lieu of cancellation and handle these changes on a case-by-case basis. •
- Cancellations due to weather are subject to policy described above. In over 45 years of business, we have never canceled an event due to weather; if we do so, we will refund 100% of any amount you have paid us. •

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Q: Do you provide event décor?

We have a growing selection of custom food and beverage display equipment and décor that will add unique touches to your event. Our design team can also provide custom items like calligraphed escort cards and menus. Talk with your event designer about the range of these products and services.

Q: Do you offer event planning services?

Our specialty is catering. In some cases, we can be your one-stop shop. Your event designer can help you determine whether you need a professional event planner or day-of coordinator, in which case we'll happily refer you to someone we trust.

Q: Do you provide and/or coordinate rentals?

We are happy to include items from our own expansive inventory and to coordinate a third-party rental order. In fact, we prefer to coordinate the order, because we can be sure we have everything we need to make your event successful.