

BUFFET

DESCRIPTION

The twentieth century has witnessed the kind of activity that the earlier generations could not have thought of. Catering business has undergone some dramatic changes certainly due to the widespread & varied demands for the food services made by the industry and institutions

Buffet literally means side board. The food is presented in such a manner that the guest can serve themselves. It is not only popular for reception and cocktail parties but can also be unique means for presenting an entire meal. It is particularly suitable for establishments where space is limited and a large number of people are to be served. The buffet can be elaborate and elegant enough to suit the most sophisticated gourmet taste and yet again can add a special flair to the simplest of breakfast and lunch and/ or dinner menus.

However a collection of cold or hot dishes placed on a clothed table, made to look attractive by the extra edge given to the aspect of presentation, does not really justify the term "Buffet". No doubt a really centre piece or other such articles placed greatly enhances the appearance and at the same time give a certain of credibility to whole arrangement

But a successful buffet catering must use the basic principle of merchandising since well displayed items sells itself .The food display, as well as the service ware enhance the appearance of the table and act as attention getters. As supplement show pieces, the use of ice carvings, flowers butter moulds really work wonders

The buffet table, with its charm, magnetism, excitement, flavors' and food are geared to stimulate customer's appetite.

As guests approach the table, their minds subconsciously photograph them entire, display; it is artistically and attractive presented, they become

entranced with it. Tempted by wide choice and beautifully offered, they do end up doing what may be called “Impulse buying”. No matter how beautiful the table might be its appeal will be enhanced by either mechanical or human animation. Having employees serve food from chaffing or other serving dishes is not only a gracious gesture, But one that materially assists in the speeding of the service. A chef carving a goat or slicing a salmon has customer appeal, but one actually cooking a variety of omelettes, crepes or deep fry specialties kindles a kind of curiosity that is hard to resist, and practically all on lookers are attracted by the action.

TYPES OF ESTABLISHMENT

It's quite usual for the present day hi-class hotels to have a restaurant that specializes in buffet meals. The advantage of such an eating place is quite obvious from the customer point of view. The main point of consideration is, of course the lack of time.

Other than such a restaurant, it's almost fashionable for this type of meal to be served in wedding reception and all kinds of formal and informal functions. The only factor varying is the kind of service and style.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF BUFFET

Sit down Buffet : As it is evident by the name itself, other factors like food display remain the same, the only difference is that after helping themselves the guest sits down to have his meal. The table seating required in this case is just like any other occasion. If there is wine service along with food, glasses are put in advance on the tables and wine is served by the waiters.

A meal of this kind requires more than the usual number of waiters as they are required to clear the dirties in time and to ensure that all the service that is to be given on the table itself i.e., wines and towards the end tea coffee can be served

A sit down buffet is as good as any formal meal and it serves a more useful purpose for the guest, as a meal of this kind is more successful in infusing certain lightness in the atmosphere and at same time remaining formal also.

Stand up or fork Buffet: As the name suggest, there is no provision of elaborate cutlery, hence the name Fork Buffet since one cannot use a knife and fork when one is eating while standing

Special care is taken in the kind of food that s chosen for such a meal. It must be made sure that it's easy to eaten with a fork. Anything that would a knife is avoided. Curry, Casseroles with rice and noodles fish and meat salads selection are right for such a buffet.

Finger Buffet: Another kind is –Finger Buffets and this signifies the kind of meal where only snacks are served and no cutlery is required. The food served is usually dry and of size that can be taken without any inconvenience.

Breakfast Service from the Buffet (Breakfast Buffet): Most hotels today favour serving all three major meals through buffet, especially breakfast, as guests have less time and demand quick service.

In the buffet style of service all breakfast items are served from the buffet. However beverages, toast, egg preparations, steaks etc may be cooked to order and served by the waiter. During the course of the breakfast, waiters nay assist guest in serving water, clearing used cutlery, glassware, soiled plates

A buffet has normally the following spread

Assorted fruit juices (normally two or three)

Fresh fruits-papaya, apples, oranges, pineapple, grapes, banana, etc.

Stewed Fruits- figs, prunes, apples, apricot

Breakfast Cereals- cornflakes, wheat flakes porridge muesli Fish- fried fish, grilled fish, and kedgerree.

Meat- Ham, Steaks cooked to order.

Vegetables- Grilled tomato, Hash brown potatoes, Baked beans.

Assorted Breads and other bakery goodies.

Waffles

Butter-Cholesterol free butter low sodium fat, sugar free jam, low calorie sugar

Dosa idly vada, stuffed parathas, Poori sabji.

Varieties of chutney, sambar, and pickle.

Curd Skimmed milk Coffee, Tea.

Reception Tea or Buffet Tea: Buffet tea is arranged during the special functions and private parties where more number of people is to be served. In this method, food and beverages are served to the guests from a buffet table. The points concerning buffet set-up , arrangement of food and beverages on the buffet, and assignment of duties to the staff should be taken into account while extending service from the buffet.

The following points on food and beverage arrangement on the buffet.

- Food is displayed on the food counter during the tea service in any of the two ways.
- By plating the dishes just before the arrival of the guests. The system is effective when more number of guests is served within a very short time.
- By arranging the dishes in the container (chafing dish, bowls, platters, etc.) and serving the guests with the aid of tongs , pastry slice , or service spoons and forks depending on the type of dish. These service gears should be placed on the side plate just behind the dish closer to the service staff if it is served by the waiter or front of the dish if guest is required to serve himself/herself. The appropriate accompanying sauces will be kept on the buffet and occasional tables for the guests to help themselves.

Juice and soft drinks counter will have an ice box in which the bottles and cans may be placed to chill. Alternatively, electric-operated bottle chiller or cooler may be positioned behind the counter.

•The tea and coffee section of buffet will have coffee, tea and milk in insulated silver urns. Hot beverages, such as coffee and tea are either pre mixed with milk, kept separate or in both the forms depending on the profile of the guests. Most Indian guests prefer drinking tea and coffee with milk. In such cases, a relatively more quantity of pre mixed coffee and tea should be placed in the insulated silver urns and sugar is kept separately. It should be ensure that there is an adequate supply of teaspoons. Small quantity of black coffee and tea and pieces of lemon should be kept in case any guest wants to have these. The urns used must be drip free and to dip the place neat.

Water section should have adequate glasses. It may be either glassware or disposables. Some time, 200ml water bottles may be placed or water dispenser may be used. If pet bottles are used, water glasses may not be necessary. However, small quantity of glasses should be kept handy if anyone needs it. In many places, water will be fetched in a big jug from the main water container and poured into the glass. This container should be nearer the water station so as to facilitate quicker service.

DOCUMENT CENTER

Cold Buffet: This is a type of buffet favoured by westerners regarding display of cold items like meat platters and such other cold items which they prefer to have before the meal acting as an appetizer for them. It has actually originated from the western habit of going on long drives during weekends and having picnics with home food in a scenic place nearby the lake. Today it is a lost concept but in continental menus cold food items are served at the beginning of the meal. Items like chicken galantine or meat loafs, canapés, terrines are generally served in this course. A separate buffet table is set out for these items which are generally very well garnished with high visual appeal.

BUFFET SETTINGS

The next aspect concerning buffet is that of setting up of a buffet, under which the layout and display is dealt. The term buffet covers everything from a full meal of many covers and decorated whole joints to nothing more elaborate than sandwiches and fancy cakes. It's therefore essential to determine or define precisely what type of meal is intended. Functions are planned in meticulous detail from the beginning to end, anticipating all the bottle necks and generally leaving nothing to chance.

Display: whether a simple affair or a spectacular display, the buffet provides the caterer with an opportunity for displaying artistic and culinary talents. Ice carvings decorated food, trays especially for cakes are used singly or in combination to dramatize and individualize buffet tables.

Edible centre pieces: edible centre pieces or partially edible, centre pieces can highlight different sections of the table, or can be most attractive as the focal point on the buffet. For a large elaborate buffet table, they may be separated by an elegant floral arrangement or an ice carving

Melon pieces: Melons particularly watermelons can be made into eye catching centre pieces. They are arranged vertically or horizontally depending upon the amount of display space allowed and the effect desired.

Decorated Food presentations: Hot foods require only the very simple of garnishes- sprigs of parsley, crisp fresh watercress, carrot curls, and lemon wedges and in the case of Indian dishes garnishes, which can be added quickly.

Service: As indicated before the function must be planned in minute detail right from the beginning to the end, anticipating everything and leaving nothing to chance. Service is a very aspect of the whole operation. It is quite obvious that the service required in the sit-down kind of buffet where serving in case of a few items are required on the table. In a buffet, the service must be

efficient and quick. The demands made to the kitchen for replenishment must be on time. Correct anticipation is indispensable to the whole operation. Timely clearance is another area which requires attention.

Sequence of food items:

- Hors d'oeuvre.
- Salad
- Potage
- Entrée /main course
- Dessert
- Tea / coffee

MENU PLANNING

Balanced, Harmonious and Visual Appeal: This can be properly affected by the variation of

1. Colour.
2. Texture.
3. Ingredients.

Suitability for a particular occasion: This particular factor is decided by

1. Season
2. Price level
3. Type of meal to be served
4. Type of guest expected

Caterer's Angle: This is certainly one of the most important considerations as it directly concerns the establishment. Factors that play an important role are

1. Kitchen capacity.
2. Kitchen skills
3. Type of service required
4. Bulk service needs.

Staff Requirement	The brigade for a buffet would comprise of the following:	
	<u>Designation</u>	<u>No. Required</u>
	1) Head Waiter or Banquet Head Waiter	01
	2) Waiter per 25/30 covers	01
	3) Wine Waiter per 40 covers	01
	4) Barman per 3 wine waiters	01
	5) Commis for fetching and clearance	01 to 02
	6) Chef for 30/40 guests for service	01
Area Requirement per guest	10 to 12 square feet per person	
Advantages & Disadvantages of	The buffet service has lot of advantages:	

Buffet

- i) It eliminates the need for a huge manpower. A huge customer turnover can be attended with a limited staff.
- ii) The dishes can be elaborately garnished and displayed on the buffet table.
- iii) The customers can choose their own dishes from the display.

The disadvantages and precautions that are to be taken are:

- i) To ensure proper portion control and monitor so that there is minimum wastages.
- ii) Identify the fast moving dish and ensure proper service of the dish with the caterer's own staff so that the wastage is controlled.
- iii) Timely replenishing of fast moving dishes.
- iv) Maintenance of service temperatures of the dishes that are served.
- v) Availability of utility staff for cleaning the dining hall due to spillage of food on the buffet table and the service area as well as the food will be handled mainly by the customers themselves.
- vi) Adequate staff for clearance of soiled dishes.
- vii) Adequate availability of cutlery and crockery to meet the customer demand, and adequate supply of water and cloakrooms for washing especially when there is finger buffet.