

Checklist - food & beverage

food and drink checklist

The catering and refreshments will very much depend on the venue and type of reception you have decided to organise. Many venues may be able to recommend particular caterers or may even insist that you use a particular one. However, for the marquee in the garden, local restaurants, bakers, off-licences and even supermarkets will be more than willing to quote. Seriously consider a professional caterer if your guest list exceeds 20. You might not enjoy yourself if you're running around worrying about dirty dishes and whether or not everyone has had enough to eat. If you look after the catering yourself, hire staff to serve and clear up. It's money well spent. It's probably best not to accept invited guests' offers to help. They are meant to be celebrating with you. Ask friends for recommendations of someone who will suit your needs and your pocket.

Before choosing your caterer, think about the style of reception you are having. A banquet caterer may not be appropriate for your intimate cocktail reception for 40 guests.

What packages do they offer?

What is included?

Are they flexible with their menu choices?

Can you make suggestions?

Is there a vegetarian alternative?

Can they accommodate special dietary requirements?

Can they accommodate children?

How soon can you have a menu tasting?

What kind of kitchen facilities will they require?

Will you be having finger food, a buffet or a sit down meal?

Are they able to work creatively within your budget?

Is the serving staff included in the price?

What is the ratio of staff to guests?

What will the staff wear?

Have they catered a wedding at your venue before?

How many other bookings do they have for the same day?

Do they provide all necessary china, glassware and utensils?

If rental equipment is necessary, who is responsible for it's delivery, cleaning and return?

Will your contact be at the reception to oversee the event?

When is the final guest count due?

Can they accommodate unexpected guests?

What is the additional charge?

What brands of beverages will be served?

Can you supply your own alcohol? Is there a corkage fee?

Will you have a free bar or will guests pay for their own beverages?

In the event of a paying bar, do they have a license?

Determine which drinks you would like served when (i.e. kir royales on arrival, wine with dinner, champagne for speeches, etc).

Until what time the bar will be open?

Will the caterer supply extra bar stock like ice, fresh lemons/limes, etc.?

Do they have the correct glassware for the beverages you will be serving?

Discuss table layout, seating arrangements and the position of the cake table.

Discuss other details like can they staff a cloakroom?

Can they hand out favours?

Can they place name cards for seating arrangements?

Is a service charge included or are gratuities optional? Is there a charge for breakage?

What is the cancellation/postponement policy?

How far in advance are bookings required?

How much is the deposit to secure the date and when is it due?

How soon after the event is the balance due?

Is VAT included in the final price?

Confirm dates, times and details with a written contract. Include a breakdown of charges for food, drinks, corkage, staff, delivery, travel expenses, equipment hire, service charges, etc.

Get insurance.