

Production and preparation

Foods, techniques and equipment

Producing food for any special occasion requires a great deal of thought and preparation. Food ingredients, equipment and facilities must be of a high standard and preparation techniques must follow hygiene and safety regulations.

Foods

Below are a set of guidelines for selecting and preparing food for special occasions. Foods should be:

- appropriate to the occasion and appeal to the ages, cultures and likes of the group
- in season so they are of the best quality and price
- varied in colour, flavour and texture
- in top condition—spoiled, contaminated, damaged, rotten or out-of-date foods are not acceptable
- ordered in suitable quantities to avoid wastage
- prepared at a suitable time to ensure the best quality—some foods can be prepared the day before while others must be prepared just before the event.

Techniques

The host or caterer of any event must work in an organised and professional manner. Most caterers use a special time plan to ensure that things run smoothly. There are a number of practices that a good host should follow to ensure that food is safe, hygienic and appealing. These include:

- tying back or covering hair, having clean, short nails and wearing proper protective clothing such as aprons and closed-in shoes
- washing hands regularly with hot soapy water, especially after using the toilet
- using clean utensils and not licking fingers or cooking spoons when preparing food

- using clean chopping boards to prepare meat and vegetables to avoid **cross-contamination**
- using clean tongs to handle or transfer food
- employing skilled workers who are trained to operate special equipment, for example a spit roast
- preparing food using a production-line approach with a set time plan
- dividing the kitchen into four main kitchen areas for food preparation, food service, cooking, and cleaning so that workers do not get in each other's way and food is not accidentally contaminated
- following recipes accurately
- remembering any religious rules for special religious occasions.

Equipment

Kitchen equipment must be safe and reliable if it is to be used to prepare and serve food for special occasions. Remember that:

- facilities must be appropriate for the number of guests being served
- if the celebration is to be held at a venue away from home, the host or caterer must consider what equipment and facilities are available
- cutlery, plates and storage space in refrigerators, freezers, cupboards and benches must be organised before the event to avoid any last-minute shortages
- kitchen equipment such as hand mixers, microwave ovens, blenders and stoves must be tested and checked before the event to detect any faulty equipment
- only equipment that saves time should be used—the preparation and cleaning of some equipment outweighs its value
- oven, refrigerator and freezer temperatures must be tested to see that they are suitable for keeping food safe and so preventing any risk of food poisoning

9.3.1 A chef is required to be properly attired, in keeping with hygiene and safety practices.

cross-contamination: transfer of bacteria or other micro-organisms from one food or item of equipment to another.



- equipment should be cleaned before and after use to ensure proper hygiene—stored equipment can often attract insects, rodents and cockroaches
- there must be enough serving equipment such as spoons, forks and tongs—when people swap serving utensils, cross-contamination can easily occur.

Small- and large-scale catering

The size of an event can have a great impact on the preparation involved. Planning an event for five or ten people is very different from organising an event for hundreds of guests.

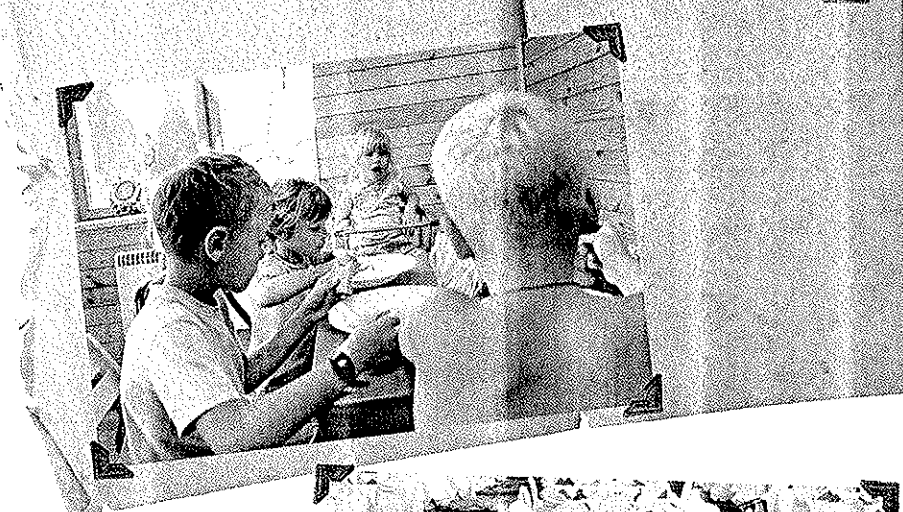
Planning ahead allows the host to organise an appropriate menu according to the information they have on the number of guests attending. This planning is necessary to:

- avoid excessive waste of food and money
- avoid the embarrassment of running short of food
- ensure that the food is the best choice for the event.

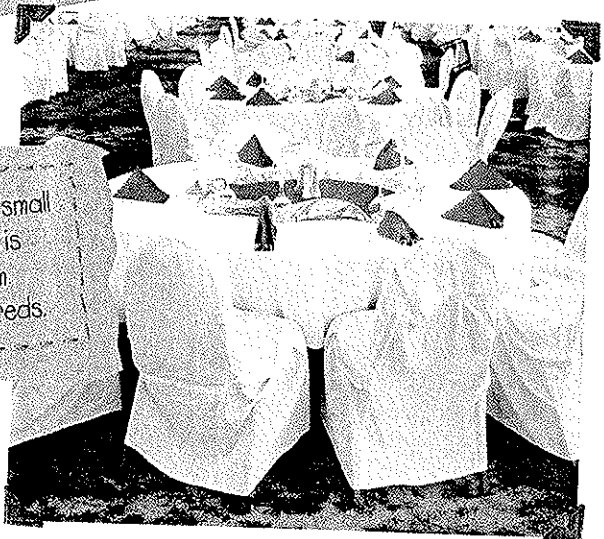
Consider the following. A sit-down awards dinner for 250 business people is to be held. If the caterer serves steak with pepper sauce to the guests, it would be hard to prepare and keep the steaks warm and prevent them from going dry and tough before serving. A suitable alternative would be a beef casserole, lamb curry or chicken cacciatore that could remain simmering at the correct temperature and still maintain its high quality.

When catering for small numbers of guests, it is relatively easy to estimate rough quantities of food.

When catering for large numbers of guests, a rough guess or estimate is not suitable. Every caterer follows a set of guidelines similar to these shown on page 244. A host must consider the factors listed when planning a menu.



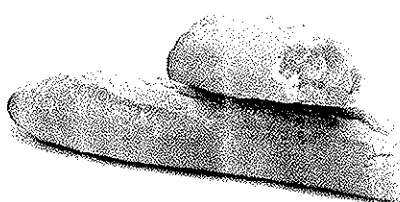
9.3.2 Catering for small numbers of guests is very different from catering for hundreds.



Many foods cannot be pre-prepared too far in advance. Bread becomes stale, cut or peeled potatoes go brown and whipped cream begins to liquefy.

9.3.3 Caterers' quantity guide

Type of event	Approximate number or items or portions per person	Foods commonly served
Evening cocktail party	8–10 items of food per person (sweet and savoury) 2 or 3 serviettes a small handful of nuts (20–30 grams) a small handful of chips (40–50 grams) 10 millilitres serving of dipping sauce	Finger food such as hors d'oeuvres, canapés, nuts, chips, cocktail frankfurts, champagne and mineral water
Lunch or dinner party	100 grams meat per person 1 medium potato 1 cup cooked rice or pasta ¼ cup peas ¼ of a lettuce ¼ medium tomato ½ medium carrot 1 cup of fruit salad ½ cup whipped cream 3 cold beverages per person 1 hot beverage per person	Roast meats, salads, baked vegetables, pasta, rice, fruit salad, cakes, ice-cream, soft drinks, juice, tea and coffee
Morning or afternoon teas	4 items of food per person (sweet and savoury) 2 or 3 hot beverages per person 1 cold beverage per person	Light foods such as slices, cakes, muffins, biscuits, flans, juice, tea and coffee



Class buffet activity

Purpose

As a class, to organise a lunch buffet that your class would enjoy. You will need to know the number of students in your class.

Materials

recipes for lunch buffet food, pen and paper, a food order and your notebook

Steps

- 1 Select a theme and decide on a suitable menu. Every student should suggest a possible recipe and then the class should vote on which would be best.

- 2 Establish suitable quantities for each recipe selected. Try not to prepare too much food. Your teacher will be able to guide you.
- 3 Construct a food order and include the date on which the event will be held.
- 4 Allocate tasks for the event. Remember, workflow is important. Try to organise your school kitchen into the four main work areas. Set out a time plan.
- 5 Organise layout of food and the decorations needed for the day. Each person can bring something to make the event special.
- 6 Design and produce a menu to paste into your notebook.

Activities

- 1 Did you encounter any problems while organising and planning your buffet?
- 2 Was the workflow plan helpful? Explain.
- 3 Was there food left over?
- 4 Should you have had more of any foods?
- 5 Were all of the recipes successful?
- 6 How could you improve the buffet if you were to do it again?

Tip
Use the caterers' quantity guide to help you when ordering the foods.