





## KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE

IN THIS, OUR FOLLOW ON TO LAST ISSUE'S COLUMN WHICH DISCUSSED YOUR OPTIONS FOR FINGER FOOD AND CANAPÉS, STEPHANIE AND PHILIP CHAT ABOUT A FEW OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO YOU WHEN IT COMES TO SEATED MEALS.

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There's a lot to be said for plated menus ... no queuing at buffet counters, and the food is beautifully presented just the way the chef envisaged. Between courses is a good time to have your speeches, ensuring the evening flows according to your timetable. It's also a more formal dining option, harking back to an age of grace and elegance. However, it should be said that this is by no means the only option.

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# PLATED

FOR A MORE FORMAL LEVEL  
OF GUEST SERVICE, PLATED  
DINNERS ARE A NATURAL  
CHOICE.

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You endeavour to create a pop-up restaurant where a full meal is served in courses to seated guests.

The meal may consist of a set menu where the guests are served any number of courses pre-chosen by the host, or the host could offer their guests a limited choice of dishes per course. Offering variety to guests can slow down the service slightly as the waiters will need to take the orders and the chefs will need time for plating the dishes. However, this does allow for speeches or other formalities of the evening to take place between courses, if desired.

An alternative is to have an Entrée Trio to start. This is a tasting plate of three small choices of entrée, offering your guests a visual sensation and a variety of tastes while removing the need to take orders.

Plated events generally increase costs over the cost of a buffet event due to additional staffing requirements for on-site meal plating and for service to all of your guests at the same time.

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# BUFFET

WHEN CATERING FOR LARGER NUMBERS, THE OLD ADAGE OF 'LESS IS MORE' IS WORTH BEARING IN MIND. A WELL-PLANNED BUFFET IS MORE APPETISING THAN LOTS AND LOTS OF DIFFERENT CONTRASTING FLAVOURS AND FOODS. THINK ABOUT FLAVOUR COMBINATIONS AND AVOID CLASHES, AS PEOPLE OFTEN PILE A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING ONTO THEIR PLATES.

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The standard buffet generally includes a compound salad, a hot vegetable dish, a starch and up to three main dishes, with condiments and dressings.

A bread selection can either be served at the buffet table or on each individual table.

A selection of desserts may either be served at a separate station or served once the mains have been cleared.

At a wedding the top table would be served seated at their table followed by each table being invited to the buffet in a pre determined order (generally family first followed by the remaining tables).

One alternative is to have themed buffet stations, which is a full meal where menu items are served in various areas of your venue at several tables in a buffet style. Often, each station has a specific theme. This can be so much fun, as the station themes are endless! Stations can also be combined, with a Chef to prepare items to order.

This type of menu style often allows guests to enjoy a wider sampling of menu items compared to a standard buffet. Your guests are also likely to circulate more, often leading to a talk / mingle atmosphere.

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# INDIVIDUAL TABLE BUFFETS

INDIVIDUAL TABLE BUFFETS ARE  
FAST BECOMING A FAVOURITE OF  
OUR CLIENTS AND OURS.

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Guests are served central platters that generally consist of two mains, a salad and a vegetable dish, placed in the centre of each table.

This is a more formal style than a buffet, as guests are not required to stand and move to get their meal.

It is a very interactive form of dining and helps break the ice and promote conversation amongst guests who may be unfamiliar with each other as the platters are passed around the table.

Desserts can either be served in the same central platter style or on a dessert station if you would like your guests to stand and mingle at this stage of the evening.

This is a more cost effective option as fewer staff members are required than a would be for a plated meal, and the meal is easier to portion per table.

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