



How Much Food Is Required for a Reception?

It is imperative to always serve food with any cocktail hour or reception. Never think that simply providing beverages at the end of a meeting will suffice as an acceptable reception regardless if your guests recently ate lunch. Provide mixed nuts, pretzels, crackers and cheese or something similar for a brief beverage gathering if it's held after lunch or brunch. For a "typical" cocktail/reception function, always consider serving 4-5 appetizers per person depending on time of day. However, if you host a reception over dinner time; you can bet that folks will expect to be eating at your reception as if it were a dinner event. Therefore, depending on your target audience and the geographic location -- serve 5-8 pieces per person if your event is hosted over the dinner hour. Note that when ordering display food stations for your reception guests, you will never need to order food equating to the total number of attending guests -- again, depending on your geographic location for your event. For instance, if you are ordering a vegetable crudité for an event with 100 people attending, we suggest ordering a display for 30-50 maximum. When in doubt, discuss quantities with the onsite catering manager beforehand.

For an evening after-dinner beverage hour, then it would behoove you to serve your desserts and coffee with cordials, cognac, and dessert wines.

Managing a Limited Budget for a Reception — Reduce Costs without Hard Liquor.

One of the best ways to reduce costs and still maintain a successful reception is to host a beer & wine only reception. A bottle of wine would equate to just over 6 servings if the bartender poured a suggested 4 oz serving, but that can be small. A standard pour at a bar /restaurant is about 6 oz, so figure about 5 glasses. Hard liquor is costly and exposes you and your firm you are representing to liability issues if an individual should consume more than he/she can handle responsibly. Serving just beer & wine along with non-alcoholic beverages, your guests will enjoy themselves and chances are you will be under budget or at least eliminate unexpected beverage costs.

Securing a Contract — Successful Strategies Require Professional Contract Negotiations

Having your secretary or friend negotiate your hotel or event contract will most always result in lost value-add benefits, a loss in savings, and a gain in significant unexpected hidden costs. Once a contract is signed, your event professional is stuck with a slew of unnecessary clauses and expenses that will not be in your favor when the event concludes. Let an event professionals handle the details as he/she is familiar with venue and labor contracts and savvy in negotiating for your benefit. Some of the most critical points in any hotel/destination contract are attrition, penalty charges, cancellation agreements, miscellaneous hidden fees, upgrades, and more. Additionally, an event professional working with various establishments is able to create 'buying power' on your behalf which will not affect your bottom line. So the next time you are looking for space and securing your contract, contact your event professional first... do not sign anything or verbally commit to a venue/destination before enlisting your planner, or all your negotiations will be lost. The cost to hire your event planning professional will most always be absorbed within the substantial savings garnered on your behalf.