

Finding the Caterer for Your Event!

Set up your meeting with your prospective caterer and take this list with you. Be sure to ask the caterer to compose an outline highlighting the cost per person, menu selections, service options and additional fees that could be incurred.

Remember, you are doing the hiring, you are paying the bill, so you deserve to know everything and you deserve to ask the questions.

- Can the caterer schedule a taste-testing of the specific foods you are interested in before hiring them? This is something that most catering services will do.

- Will the person you are speaking to be present at the event?

- How much of a deposit is required? Is the deposit refundable?

- How soon before the event do you need the final count?

- When is the final payment due? What are the preferred forms of payment?

- What does the price-per-person include?

- Are you required to pay full price for small children?

- Would the caterer be willing to meet you at the venue to draw up a floor plan?

- Are you expected to tip the staff?

- How will the catering company handle table arrangements and arrangement of food on the buffet and plates? Can you see photos of their previous work? Does the caterer haul away all the trash when they leave?

- Does the catering company have a valid license and proper insurance? A license lets you know that catering services have met health department standards and that they have liability insurance should an accident occur.

- Will the caterer pack some small boxes of food for those people involved in the event who may not be able to eat during the event?

- Does the company specialize in any particular types of foods? Catering services should provide you with sample menus to review. Is the caterer familiar with the venue?

- What is the average price range of the caterer's food? Is it an all-inclusive flat rate or is the cost determined by the type of food and service?

- Does the catering company provide alcohol? Is the bar something you can handle on your own? If so, is there a corkage fee?

- Does the caterer handle all table settings? Will they be putting out place cards and favors? Find out what non-food items of this nature that they will provide and if it is not a part of their service, then will they make arrangements for rentals or is this something you will be responsible for?

- Does the catering service provide wait staff? How many would they recommend for an event the size of yours? (Recommended ratio is 1 server for every 10 guests) What will the servers wear? Many catering services will provide their own wait staff because they understand the catering service's way of doing business.

- Where will the food be prepared? Will there be on-site facilities that the catering company can use? If the caterer has to bring in their own equipment, will this cost extra?

- What is the catering service's availability on the day of your event and will they be working any other events on the same day? You want to be sure they will be devoting sufficient time to your event.

- Can you get a list of references from previous events?