



## Catering

The decision to have your wedding reception professionally catered or to cater it yourself is sometimes considered. Cost is one of the factors, as well as the time and effort that you and/or your family will have to devote to food shopping, preparation, serving and cleaning up, all during the days preceding and including your wedding day. Also, there are hidden costs when doing the catering yourself. These costs are often included in the quoted catered price. So, make some calls, ask lots of questions and list your options.

First consider the cost to rent your reception facility. Many restaurants, hotels and banquet facilities include in their catering charges the use of their facilities and serving staff at no extra cost—some will not even consider catering an event at another location.

Next, calculate your food budget based on how much you want to spend per guest. Restaurants and hotels may have a minimum price, where an independent caterer can work within just about any budget. Add an extra fifteen to twenty percent for overage and additional cost for gratuity, if appropriate.

Your caterer will know the quantity of each item to provide for the number of people you expect. However, a good rule of thumb is two of each item per person.

Independent caterers will bring your feast to just about any location. Their prices quite often will also include extras like table linens, plates, glasses, etc.—but ask just to be sure.

Unless you happen to choose your caterer by attending another catered event, you will probably have no chance to taste their wares in advance. So ask for a tasting.

Also, many restaurants and hotels offer buffet brunches and dinners on the weekends. This is an ideal way to taste the quality and variety available through their banquet and catering facilities.