

Tips for ordering food and beverages for receptions



RECEPTIONS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY COMMON in the corporate world and serve as important networking opportunities. When planning food-and-beverage services, remember that suggested menu offerings can be customized to fit the particular tastes and interests of your group. Seek the advice of the chef and consider the growing interest in healthier meals with local ingredients.

The price of heavy hors d'oeuvres can be as expensive as a plated meal.

also help control the speed of consumption and add style to a reception. Multiple food displays, placed around the event space, will increase movement among guests and encourage socializing. To accomplish the same purpose, seating can be limited to one-third of the guest count.

Managing alcohol service can be challenging from both a cost and a liability standpoint. A common way to reduce overconsumption and risk is to limit offerings to beer and wine. With the array of first-rate wines and

- One 750-ml bottle of alcohol equals 16 to 17 cocktails;
- One keg of beer equals 15.5 gallons or 165 glasses;
- One gallon of punch or coffee equals 20 servings.

You can assume that guests will enjoy two drinks in the first hour, and another drink for each additional hour at a weekday reception with a hosted bar. For holiday parties or weekend functions, the averages increase to two and a half drinks per person in the first hour, and one and

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Selecting bite-sized finger foods that can be eaten on cocktail napkins will allow your budget to go further. Adding plates and forks to a spread of appetizers is likely to increase consumption by one-third. The following serving sizes can serve as guides when ordering for a reception:

- Two to three pieces of each selected menu item per person;
- Four menu items (8-12 pieces per person) for a late-afternoon or happy-hour reception;
- Five or six menu items (10-15 total pieces per person) for an evening reception.

These numbers will fluctuate depending on the time and purpose of your event. Butler-passed trays can

microbrews available in the Pacific Northwest, it should be relatively easy to impress attendees with a wide selection of options. If mixed drinks are going to be hosted, it is highly recommended that OLCC-certified bartenders be hired to serve them. Any local catering company can provide recommendations for this service. One bartender per 75 guests will suffice for beer and wine, and one per 50 guests is suggested for a full bar with cocktails.

The following portion sizes can be used to estimate alcohol costs:

- One 750-ml bottle of wine equals approximately four to five glasses;
- One case of wine equals 48 to 60 glasses;

a half for each additional hour. History from past events will help you define a group's preferences and overall consumption rate.

Although food-and-beverage selection can be overwhelming, this is often the most memorable element of an event. It is advantageous to look for new ways to control costs without jeopardizing quality. By discovering unique touches and utilizing the chef's talents, you can continue to exceed your guest's expectations—not your budget. **LVN**

Elaina Spring, CMP has served as Miller Nash's event planner since 2001. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from the Evergreen State College and a Business Certificate in event management from the University of Oregon.