



Compliment Your Wedding Day with a Culinary Journey

Luca's Culinary Journey Catering

Finding your Caterer

I recommend talking to friends and do a little investigating. It's always nice to get the opinion of someone you trust. Also, attending local bridal shows can be another way to be introduced to a caterer you may not have considered. The best part is, they usually bring some food to try. The internet has become a very popular way to search for caterers. Be sure to do your homework, check sites like weddingwire.com and theknot.com where people can leave reviews about how their experience was.



Once you have narrowed down a few different caterers to choose from, think about your budget and be open with the person you are working with. Nothing is worse than getting your hopes up about a menu...only to find you can't afford it. Your caterer wants your business and will help you find the best menu for your budget. Keep in mind that when you look at a caterer's menu, they can't put everything on it that they are capable of preparing. In most cases, this would result in a menu the size of a cookbook and would just be overwhelming. If you have a certain theme or dish that you really want, don't be afraid to ask if they can do it.



You should feel comfortable with who you are considering working with. If your caterer isn't as responsive as you would like, maybe they are not the right fit for you. Once you have found someone you think would be a good fit for you and your budget, find out if they require a contract and deposit to secure your date. Once all of the paperwork is done, it is time to set up a tasting. This is the time where you can sample the food you are considering for your big day. You should also be prepared to go over your timeline from ceremony start to the reception's end. It is very helpful to bring all of your wedding information with you. Your caterer will need to know who your rental company is, photographer, DJ and so on. This way, once the timeline is done they can coordinate with your other vendors to make sure everyone is on the same timeline.

Seasonal Flavors

Consider the time of year that you are having your wedding. If you are having a fall wedding, think fall flavors; cranberry, apple and butternut squash are always great choices. If you're having a summer wedding keep the fare in sync with summer. Heavy comfort foods are typically not the best way to go, while fish, chicken and lobster with lighter sauces work well.

Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

Food allergies and dietary restrictions are something that we are seeing more and more of these days. When meeting with your caterer ask if they can accommodate nut-free, gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian options. It is also a great idea to include this question on your invitations so your guests feel welcome and know you have thought of everything.



Cocktail Hour

You should encourage your guests to enjoy hors d'oeuvres, good conversation and a cocktail. Cocktail hour is a great time for your family and friends to come together. During this time you should consider at least 4 to 6 servings per guest. I always recommend a combination of both stationary and passed hors d'oeuvres. Some of your guests will mingle near the stationary display, while others will stay at their table. Having a combination of both ensures everyone is having something to eat while you are way getting your pictures taken.



Dinner Service Style

I often find that couples are unsure of what kind of style of service to offer during dinner. Whether you choose plated, buffet, family style or stations they all can reflect your unique style as a couple.

Plated style service is always great for a formal wedding. This style also helps you stick to your timeline. Be aware, however, that this will require more staffing to make sure everyone is served in a timely manner.

Buffet style is wonderful for a more casual wedding. Be sure to check with your caterer on how they execute a buffet style. Ask questions such as to whether everyone will go up at the same time, or whether someone will go around and call the tables individually to the buffet. Having someone in charge to call the tables one by one to the buffet ensures that each guest will arrive at a buffet full of food. Keep in mind that this style typically requires ordering a larger food quantity.



Family style is a great way to encourage families to come together and pass food around the table to each other. I find this style encourages more conversation than any of the others. You should be aware that this style will require more rentals for platters and serving utensils.

Don't be afraid to let the menu reflect who you are as a couple. If you are a fun-loving, outgoing couple, consider something different like a station style dinner. This is a style that has recently become more popular. Station style can be a mini slider station, taco bar and a pasta station. Typically "stations" also have a live chef and makes for a great interactive experience for your guests.

Let Them Have Cake

Your wedding cake is the centerpiece of the ceremony. But keep in mind not everyone loves cake. It has become more popular to have a candy station, popcorn station, mini pie station or even make your own S'mores. These not only look and taste great, but can also make great favors.

Tawnya Paturzo is the Catering Manager at Luca's Culinary Journey Catering, located in Keene, NH. It's all about the experience- Tawnya, along with Executive Chef and Owner, Gianluca Paris, have a passion for creating memorable events and believe in providing the best service possible to make your experience a lasting memory. Contact Tawnya at 603-358-5200, catering@lucascafe.com or visit their website at www.lucascafe.com

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