Plan the Perfect Menu

Westin’s talented chefs and catering managers take pride in preparing excellent and tasty meals. No matter what size your party is or how many dietary restrictions you have to work with, there’s a Westin catering option that’s right for your event, style and budget.

The tips below are designed to help event planners make the best food and beverage selections, so that all attendees will drink and dine well. (For a complete list of things to consider when planning an event, refer to the Westin Event Planning Checklist.)

Pre-Planning Checklist

Taking the time to think through some key aspects of your event will help ensure that your hotel contact can propose food and beverage options that best meet your needs.

- Review your meeting agenda to determine when you’ll need food or beverages.
- Determine your available budget.
- Compile a list of any dietary restrictions or needs your attendees may have.
- Evaluate the demographics of your attendees to help determine which food and beverage options might be most suitable.
- Jot down any key meeting themes that could be incorporated into your food and beverage selections.
Catering Glossary

Here are some common terms you may encounter when discussing food and beverage with your hotel contact. (For a more comprehensive list of event planning terminology, refer to the Event Planning Glossary.)

Action Station: A table or area where chefs prepare food to order and serve it fresh to guests.

American Plan: A room rate that includes the price of the room and all meals.

Break: A short interval between sessions at which time coffee, tea and/or other refreshments are served.

Buffet: An assortment of foods, offered on a table, self-served.

Canapé: A small, prepared and usually decorative food, held in the fingers and often eaten in one bite.

Catering: The provision of food and beverages.

Continental Plan: A room rate that includes a continental breakfast.

Covers: The actual number of meals served at a catered-meal function or in a restaurant.

eMenus: A website link provided by the hotel that allows the meeting planner to review current and seasonal menus and make food and beverage selections.

Enhancements: Individual food items that can be added to an existing package or menu.

European Plan: A room rate that does not include meals.

F&B: An abbreviation for food and beverage. This may be used in reference to your menu or to the food and beverage team at the hotel.

Family Style: A sit-down meal at which dishes of food are placed on the table, allowing diners to serve themselves.

Grab and Go: Pre-packed boxes containing food items and a drink, often used for instances when attendees need to eat on the go.

Hosted Bar: An arrangement in which the host pays for all drinks, either by the hour, by the bottle, by the drink or per person.

Minimum: The smallest number of covers and/or beverages served at a catered event. A surcharge may be added to the client’s bill if the minimum is not reached.

Modified American Plan (MAP): A room rate that includes two meals a day – usually breakfast and dinner.

Passed Hors d’Oeuvres: Finger-friendly foods (or canapés) passed by servers, along with cocktail napkins.

Plated Service: Foods arranged on individual plates in the kitchen and then served to guests seated at a table.

Plus Plus: The addition of taxes and service charges to a price when not included, usually designated by “++.”

Prix Fixe: A multicourse meal at a set per-person price.

Reception: A stand-up social function at which beverages and light foods are served. Foods may be presented on small buffet tables or passed by servers. May precede a meal function.

Service Charge: A mandatory and automatic amount added to standard food and beverage charges – usually to defray the cost of labor, such as housemen, servers, technicians, etc. – of which the facility receives a portion of the charge. In return, the meeting planner is relieved of responsibility for tipping.
Stations: Similar to the buffet concept but tables are broken out by food concept/item.

Keep in mind that price quotes for food and beverage typically don’t include service charges and fees. Additional charges vary by market and hotel, so be sure to ask your hotel representative what you should expect.

Ideas & Inspiration

- Variety is key
  Having a wide range of options available not only helps address dietary restrictions (see below) but also allows attendees to sample a variety of exciting dishes.

- Go local
  Allow the executive chef and team to highlight local specialties in their menus, so your attendees can experience a taste of the local cuisine and culture.

- Be seasonal
  Not only is seasonal produce good for your budget, it tastes better.

- Be sensitive to dietary restrictions
  Whether due to personal preference or allergy, dietary restrictions are commonplace today. Our chefs are happy to help you select dishes that deliver against a multitude of dietary restrictions, and work with you to develop menu options suitable for all attendees. Common dietary restrictions include gluten-free, lactose/dairy-free, vegetarian and vegan. Common allergies include peanuts, tree nuts and shellfish. Be sure to provide a way for your attendees to inform you of any dietary restrictions, so you can ensure that they are accommodated at your event.

- Eating well isn’t just for dieters
  Offering nutritious food and beverage options will help ensure that your attendees feel their best and don’t lose energy throughout the day. Menus should contain a healthy mix of fresh fruits and vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains.

- Ask about SuperFoodsRX™ Meeting Breaks as well as Westin Fresh by the Juicery
  Westin Hotels & Resorts specialize in nutritious rich snacks and nourishing smoothies that give meeting attendees the energy they need to power through any meeting. SuperFoodsRX menu items feature scientifically paired superfoods, unlocking their greatest nutritious potential. Westin Fresh by The Juicery features cold pressed juices and smoothies that are packed with key vitamins and minerals to fuel both the body and the mind.