

# Service Styles and Table Settings

**Unit:** Preparing Foods

**Problem Area:** Menu Planning

**Lesson:** Service Styles and Table Settings

- **Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

- 1 Describe the various service styles.**
- 2 Demonstrate different table settings.**

- **Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

The Culinary Institute of America. *The Professional Chef*, 9th ed. Wiley, 2011.

“Culinary Service Styles: From Buffet to Tapas,” *associatedcontent*. Accessed May 18, 2011. <[http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/131105/culinary\\_service\\_styles\\_from\\_buffet.html?cat=22](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/131105/culinary_service_styles_from_buffet.html?cat=22)>.

Letchworth, Celesta. “Setting a Formal Place Setting,” *eHow.com*. Accessed June 2, 2011. <[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_8126106\\_setting-formal-place-setting.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_8126106_setting-formal-place-setting.html)>.

Molt, Mary. *Food for Fifty*, 13th ed. Prentice Hall, 2011.

“Setup Guide,” *Bright Settings*. Accessed June 2, 2011. <<http://www.brightsettings.com/setup-guide.html>>.



## ■ Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities

- ✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
- ✓ Visual(s) from accompanying masters
- ✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet(s), and/or other items designed for duplication
- ✓ Materials listed on duplicated items
- ✓ Computers with printers and Internet access
- ✓ Classroom resource and reference materials

## ■ Key Terms. The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- ▶ buffet
- ▶ butlered menu
- ▶ cocktail party
- ▶ cover
- ▶ French service
- ▶ open house
- ▶ personal food stations
- ▶ Russian service
- ▶ table d'hôte
- ▶ table setting
- ▶ tapas

# CONTENT SUMMARY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

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**Objective 1:** Describe the various service styles.

**Anticipated Problem:** What are some service styles?

- I. Service styles vary, typically based on the event as well as the desired menu, number of guests, budget, and space limitations. The major service styles are buffet, formal, and informal. Variations and less frequently used styles also exist.
  - A. Buffet service: A **buffet** is a popular service style in which people can select what they want to eat from a display of food choices and often serve themselves. The number of servers needed is reduced. A buffet may be traditional or may have stations.
    1. A traditional buffet is a popular choice in restaurants and hotels. In a traditional buffet, several free-standing displays offer customers numerous choices.

Plates are available for customers to help themselves when they are ready to eat.

2. A station buffet has various areas throughout the dining facility where customers can select scrumptious morsels. At high-end establishments, ice sculptures and other artistic expressions may be present on the station tables. A station buffet may include, for example:
  - a. A grill (e.g., a Mongolian grill)
  - b. An omelet station
  - c. A pasta station
  - d. A salad station
  - e. A dessert station

#### B. Formal service

1. **French service** is a service style in which the server brings the food on a platter for the guest to place on his or her plate, sometimes after tableside preparation of the dish.
  - a. Traditional French service (in the 1800s) often involved as many as 32 courses.
  - b. Traditional French service was brought to the table in two or three parts.
  - c. When the dishes were set on the table, people would help themselves. (So guests with long arms preferred this service style.) Then the dishes would be removed for the “second round” of food, starting the cycle again.
2. **Russian service** is a service style that calls for serving each guest individually at the table. This service traditionally involves bringing platters to the table and placing food directly on the guest’s plate. This type of service was introduced in the early 1800s by an ambassador of the Russian Czar.
3. **Table d’hôte** (“host’s table”) is a type of limited menu for multi-course meals with a fixed price. “Prix fixe” (fixed price) is another name for this type of menu. Silverware for all courses will be placed on the table in advance. Diners use the outer silverware first.

#### C. Informal service

1. **Tapas** is an informal service style that involves small portions of table d’hôte items brought to the table on small plates, in bowls, or on small platters and passed around for members of the party to share. This method of service is extremely popular in Spain.
2. An **open house** is an informal service style that typically involves trays with the same food items served throughout the event. Servers often carry around trays with smaller items. People often use this service style for graduation celebrations and holiday gatherings.
3. A **cocktail party** is a gathering with friends, family, and/or business associates that includes mainly wine and spirits. However, many people add finger foods to the service. A **butlered menu** is an abbreviated menu of appetizers typically served at a cocktail party and presented to guests on trays carried around by servers.

4. **Personal food stations** are lazy Susans placed on the dining tables, with small serving dishes to hold proteins, starches, and vegetables for self-service. An advantage of this service style is the ability for large numbers of guests to be served promptly without the mess and fuss of lines or a large service staff.

**Teaching Strategy:** As a class, discuss the pros and cons of each type of service. Ask the students what they prefer and why. Use VM–A and VM–B to aid in the discussion. Then assign LS–A.

**Objective 2:** Demonstrate different table settings.

**Anticipated Problem:** What methods are used to set tables?

## II. Table settings

- A. Setting a table correctly usually requires some training. What is proper for one type of food service may vary widely from what is proper for another. Also, cultural differences may present additional methods and techniques. **Table setting** is the act of placing dishes and utensils (tableware) in a specific order for serving and eating.
  1. A reception or tea may be formal or casual. The menu will vary according to the number and age of guests as well as the event budget. However, the table arrangement should be as follows:
    - a. Two lines of service should be set up.
    - b. Plates and beverages should be first.
    - c. Food items (e.g., small sandwiches and tea cakes) should be next.
    - d. Utensils and napkins should be at the end of the line.
    - e. A small table could be set up nearby with silverware and china to prevent the table from looking cluttered.
    - f. Serving plates should be small and should not be crowded. Instead, they should be replenished frequently via trays from the kitchen.
    - g. A centerpiece should be in the middle of the table.
  2. A buffet typically offers two or three entrées, one or two vegetables, two or three salads, relishes, hot bread, dessert, and a beverage. In general, for every 65 guests, 10 feet of buffet table space should be available. Two buffet lines are recommended for groups that exceed 50 people. The table configuration should be as follows:
    - a. At the beginning of the buffet line should be the plates. Some buffet lines may provide guests with trays as well.
    - b. The entrée (or entrées) should be next, with serving spoons on spoon rests to the right of each dish.
    - c. Hot vegetables should be next, followed by salads and bread.
    - d. Beverages, cups, utensils, and napkins should be at the end of the buffet line.

- e. A centerpiece should be present.
  - f. Desserts may be placed on a separate table and may be plated in individual portions, if desired.
  - g. Depending on the number of guests and the number of servers, guest tables may be set with rolls, butter, and water. Beverages may be served rather than provided in the buffet line.
  - h. Trays and chafing dishes should be placed at an angle to the table, if possible.
  - i. Placing a mirror under the centerpiece can add dimension to the table.
3. Banquet service, or American service, is often used for special occasions. It involves plate service, which means the servers bring the salad plate, the entrée plate, and dessert to each guest.
- a. A tablecloth is typically used. The cloth should not touch the chairs; it should extend 6 to 12 inches over the tabletop.
  - b. The **cover** is the plate, silverware, glasses, and napkin to be used by each person. Approximately 25 inches of space is needed for each cover, and silverware should be placed 1 inch from the edge of the table and in the order of use.
    - (1) To the right of where the plate will be served is a knife, and a spoon is to the right of the knife. (The knife may be omitted if it will not be needed.)
    - (2) To the left of where the plate will be served is the entrée fork, with a salad fork to the left of it. If a cocktail fork will be used, it should be placed to the right of the cover. A dessert fork may be placed above the dinner plate.
    - (3) A napkin should be placed next to the forks.
    - (4) The water glass should be placed slightly above the knife.
    - (5) The wine glass should be to the right of the water glass and slightly forward.
    - (6) The bread-and-butter plate should be just above the tip of the fork and slightly to the left. A butter spreader should be placed across the plate on its northernmost edge, with the cutting edge facing the center of the plate.
    - (7) Salt and pepper shakers should be present for every six guests. Therefore, 12 guests at a table would require two salt and two pepper shakers. They should be placed parallel to the edge of the table and in line with sugar bowls and creamers.
    - (8) The centerpiece should not obstruct the view of any of the guests. Candles should be used only at night and should not be mixed with electric light.
    - (9) If place cards are used, they should be placed on the napkin or above the cover.
4. French table service settings were based on the concept of a server presenting platters to guests from their selections. The guests served themselves, and the

food would be presented until the utensil signal for finished (knife and fork together at top of plate).

- a. The dinner plate should be directly in front of the guest, and the salad plate should be on top of the dinner plate.
  - b. The dinner fork should be to the left of the dinner plate, and the salad fork should be to the left of the dinner fork.
  - c. The napkin should be directly to the left of the salad fork. A special fold or a napkin ring could be used.
  - d. The bread plate should be above and to the left of the dinner plate. The butter knife should be placed on it.
  - e. The dessert spoon and fork should be to the right of the bread plate and directly above the dinner plate. The prongs of the fork should face the right. The spoon should face the opposite direction.
  - f. The dinner knife should be directly to the right of the dinner plate, and the salad knife should be to the right of the dinner knife.
  - g. The dinner spoon should be to the right of the salad knife. A soup spoon is placed to the right of the dinner spoon.
  - h. The water goblet should be above the dinner knife.
  - i. The red wine glass should be above the dinner spoon and closer to the guest than the water goblet.
  - j. The white wine glass should be placed to the upper right of the red wine glass. It should not be as close to the guest as the red wine glass, but it should be closer than the water goblet.
5. Russian table service settings were based on controlling costs. Instead of guests serving themselves, the servers would dish food onto the guests' plates in measured portions. In addition, this enabled chefs to make a visual presentation on each platter.
- a. An oyster plate should be on top of the service plate.
  - b. A rolled napkin and place card should be on top of the plates.
  - c. Salt, nuts, and a menu should be above the plates.
  - d. To the left of the plates is the salad or fruit fork. To the left of the salad or fruit fork is the meat fork, and to the left of the meat fork is the fish fork.
  - e. To the right of the plates is the salad or fruit knife. To the right of that is the meat knife. To the right of the meat knife is the fish knife. To the right of the fish knife is a soup spoon with an oyster fork resting in it.
  - f. Glasses for water and wine should be placed above the cutlery on the right side above the service plate.
  - g. When the soup and service plate are removed, they are replaced by a heated plate.
  - h. Fish and meat are served from platters in correct Russian service.
  - i. Before dessert, everything should be removed from the cover except the wine and water glasses. A dessert plate should be brought out with a doily on top of it as well as a fork balanced on the left and a spoon balanced on

the right. Traditional service calls for a finger bowl to be placed on top of the dessert plate.

6. The informal family-style table service setting involves placing all the food selections on the table with serving spoons so guests can help themselves.
  - a. The plate is directly in front of the guest.
  - b. A knife is to the right of the plate, and a spoon is to the right of the knife.
  - c. An entrée fork is to the left of the plate, and a salad fork (if present) is to the left of the entrée fork.
  - d. A bread plate, if present, is above and to the left of the forks.
  - e. A coffee cup and saucer may be present. If so, they are located to the right of the spoon.
  - f. The water goblet is above the knife.
  - g. The juice or tea glass is to the right of the water goblet and slightly forward.
  - h. If a separate plate is provided for salad, it is to the left of the forks.

**Teaching Strategy:** Assign the students to groups. Have each group set a table for a certain food service. If time permits, you may want to have the students cook traditional meals to accompany their food service. Then display and discuss VM–C.

- **Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Have students explain the content associated with each objective. Student responses can be used in determining which objectives need to be reviewed or taught from a different angle.
- **Application.** Use the included visual master(s) and lab sheet(s) to apply the information presented in the lesson.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is provided.

## ■ Answers to Sample Test:

### Part One: Matching

1. d
2. e
3. f
4. c
5. a
6. b
7. g
8. h

## Part Two: True/False

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. F
7. T
8. T
9. T
10. F

## Part Three: Short Answer

See “Content Summary” I.A.1 & 2.

# Service Styles and Table Settings

## ► Part One: Matching

**Instructions:** Match the term with the correct definition.

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| a. buffet         | e. Russian service |
| b. butlered menu  | f. table d'hôte    |
| c. cocktail party | g. tapas           |
| d. French service | h. open house      |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A service style in which the server brings the food on a platter for the guest to place on his or her plate, sometimes after tableside preparation of the dish
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. A service style that calls for serving each guest individually at the table
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. A type of limited menu for multi-course meals with a fixed price
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. A gathering with friends, family, and/or business associates that includes mainly wine and spirits
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. A popular service style in which people can select what they want to eat from a display of food choices and often serve themselves
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. An abbreviated menu of appetizers typically served at a cocktail party and presented to guests on trays carried around by servers
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. An informal service style that involves small portions of table d'hôte items brought to the table on small plates, in bowls, or on small platters and passed around for members of the party to share
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. An informal service style that typically involves trays with the same food items served throughout the event



## ► Part Two: True/False

**Instructions:** Write *T* for true or *F* for false.

- \_\_\_ 1. Traditional and station are two buffet types.
- \_\_\_ 2. Tapas is a formal service style.
- \_\_\_ 3. Traditional French service (in the 1800s) often involved as many as 32 courses.
- \_\_\_ 4. “Prix fixe” (fixed price) is another name for a table d’hôte menu.
- \_\_\_ 5. A maid’s menu is an abbreviated menu of appetizers typically served at a cocktail party and presented to guests on trays carried around by servers.
- \_\_\_ 6. Russian service is an informal service style that typically involves trays with the same food items served throughout the event.
- \_\_\_ 7. In general, for every 65 guests, 10 feet of buffet table space should be available.
- \_\_\_ 8. American service is also known as banquet service.
- \_\_\_ 9. The cover is the plate, silverware, glasses, and napkin to be used by each person.
- \_\_\_ 10. In family-style service, no utensils are used.

## ► Part Three: Short Answer

**Instructions:** Answer the following.

What is the difference between a traditional buffet and a station buffet?

# PROS AND CONS OF SERVICE STYLES

Service Styles	Pros	Cons	Comments
Buffet (traditional and station)			
French service			
Russian service			
Table d'hôte			



Service Styles	Pros	Cons	Comments
Tapas			
Open house			
Cocktail party			
Butlered menu			
Personal food stations			

# FOOD SERVICE



# TABLE SETTINGS



# Planning an Event

## Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to plan an event, using your knowledge of service styles and menu planning.

## Objectives

1. Select an event.
2. Determine the appropriate service style.
3. Create a menu.

## Materials

- ◆ lab sheet
- ◆ writing utensil
- ◆ paper
- ◆ computer with Publisher and a printer (if your teacher wants a formal menu submitted rather than a rough draft on paper)

## Procedure

1. What event will you be planning?
2. Which service style is the most appropriate?
3. Create an appropriate menu for that event and service style.
4. Present your creation and reasoning to the class.

