

Healthy Catering Checklist

Planning the Meal	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Determine if any attendees have food restrictions (dietary, ethnic, or religious). Individuals in your group may have certain restrictions such as vegetarian, gluten-free, or kosher. Ask for these restrictions in advance so you can be sure the caterer is able to provide appropriate options for these people.	
<input type="checkbox"/> What is your budget for this event? Know your budget in advance to streamline the conversation with the caterer. Often times, caterers provide meal options that are priced per person.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Set the date and time for the meal.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reserve space to hold the event.	
<input type="checkbox"/> How many people will attend?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Will there be an event theme? If your event will have an overriding theme, make sure your food fits the mood.	
<input type="checkbox"/> What meals will you serve? Are you catering just a lunch or multiple meals? If your event is all day long, be sure to include snacks and refreshments for between meals.	
<input type="checkbox"/> How much space will you have to hold the food? The caterer will need to be able to fit the food in the amount of space you have available. Also consider space needed for serving the food.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Will you be able to handle hot foods if they require constant temperature? You may need to use a chafing dish or electrical header (make note of outlets) to keep food warm – especially if it will be out for an extended period of time. Be sure that you are able to accommodate these items if necessary.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Visit our meal planner to get some food ideas. Brainstorm some food ideas that will work for your event. Once you have a basic idea, the caterer can help you finalize the plan or suggest other options that can also work.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Make a list of three caterers to contact. Different caterers offer different foods and can meet different price points. Plan to contact several to find the best option for your event.	

Questions to Ask the Caterer	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Can they meet the necessary food restrictions (from above)? Make sure the caterer is aware of food restrictions from the start so that they can properly create the menu and provide alternatives where appropriate.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Can they meet your budget?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Can the caterer provide smaller portions? Control calories and your budget by reducing the amount of food per plate.	
<input type="checkbox"/> What options do they have for healthy food? Are there low-sodium and low-fat options?	
<input type="checkbox"/> What methods do they use to cook the food (e.g. steamed vs. fried)? Ask about food preparation methods as well as fat and sodium options to help improve the nutrition profile of your catered event.	
<input type="checkbox"/> What are the ingredients for the foods selected? The caterer should be able to provide an ingredient list which will help double check whether the food restrictions are met and to be sure you are getting what you desire.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Do they use local farms and produce or use other sustainable practices? Caterers that prefer sustainable food sources are not only healthy for your attendees, but also for the community. Try to give preferences to a caterer that supports local agriculture and other producers.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have the caterer provide a written quote with the specific foods.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask the caterer to provide a label for each food item that includes food restrictions. Labels will help your attendees to be sure that they are eating foods appropriate for their needs.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have the caterer serve the dressing, spreads, and dips on the side. Help your attendees manage their calories and portion sizes by serving these items on the side.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the price include plates, flatware, napkins, or other necessary items?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Will hot foods require a heating element? If so, will the caterer provide that? Ensure that the caterer will provide all of these and whether you need to pay extra for the service.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Do they deliver? Is that included in the price?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there anything that will need to be returned to the caterer? Will they come and pick those items up? Is there an extra charge?	

At the Event**Notes**

- Ensure your space is properly set up ahead of time. Have space to hold the food with sufficient room to allow attendees to serve themselves (if buffet style).
- Arrange the food items to avoid cross-contamination (for example, keep the vegetarian option away from meat so that the meat does not accidentally fall into the vegetarian dish.)
- Have fun and enjoy your event!
- If you intend to keep leftovers, refrigerate food promptly to ensure food safety.
- Let Employee Wellness know how your event went! We love to hear your stories and use your experiences