

Banquet catering research paper

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Differences between A la Carte and Banquet/Catering

A la Carte cooking and Banquet cooking both aim to satisfy diner's meal. However, there are differences between these two types of services. A la Carte is a dining style in which a person will choose an individual meal or component. An example of an A la Carte service would be on a buffet restaurant wherein a diner would get to choose his meat, his vegetable and any available side dish. Another example would be in a restaurant in which a written menu is being provided to so the diner can order his personal choice of meal. There is not just one dish written on the menu, which was prepared by the restaurant or hotel's chef. It is more like a diner's choice of meals and dishes, but with a limited or few meals to choose from.

Normally, main courses in an A la Carte menu are already complete as one meal and if the diner would require some additional dessert or vegetable, he would have to place an additional order for that. On top of every additional order is an additional price on the bill.

On the other hand, a Banquet service are the ones being rendered in a restaurant or hotel for a course usually lunch or dinner especially for a larger group or functions. The banquet service has a prearranged menu in which foods have designated stations that are prepared for self-service. In this case, a diner would have to choose from a wide variety of meals that are well-arranged on their food stations. Since the meals from the banquet services are fixed, a diner would have no personal choice of his meal in some other cases. However, since the banquet service has more courses to choose from, a diner may no longer feel the need of additional order as it the banquet service may already have the ideal course meal that they prefer to

eat.

There are also differences when it comes to equipment being used between an A la Carte and Banquet/Catering. In an A la Carte service cuisine cooking unit is the main equipment of its kitchen. Since in this type of service provides smaller amounts of dishes, then equipments being used are also smaller. In this case, burners are meant to be smaller than the ones used in banquet cooking. A la Carte menu dishes only require a small amount of special sauces that are only arranged and prepared on a cuisine plate made with cast-iron. Whether or not the cuisine is small or big, the measurements should be preferred if possible. Most of the equipment used in an A la Carte cooking are conventionally smaller in accordance with the universal measurement of A la Carte meals.

In contrast, the banquet service cooking gets to prepare more choices of dishes in a larger quantity. Bigger versions of the equipment being used in an A la Carte would be needed to cater larger groups that are assumed to dine-in. In addition, bigger round tables are needed for possible social events and bigger block, E-shaped or T-shaped tables may be needed for business events. Moreover, banquet service may need more equipments than A la Carte cooking such as chafing dishes to keep food warmed upon service, serving spoons, flatware or insulated bags for transporting foods if the event is not on site.

Banquet/Catering and A la Carte also have differences when it comes to their menu types. A la Carte menu has an entrée, main dish and dessert that has different prices. Each of the salads, vegetables, main courses, and desserts has their own prices and can be ordered separately according to diner's

preference. However, the banquet menu normally includes only one type of dessert and appetizer, but it also allows the guest to choose their main course.

When it comes to service type, there is a distinction between Banquet/Catering and A la Carte. For Banquet/Catering, there is a plated meal service in which guests are served while seated at the dining table. This is the type of service that are experienced when dining in a hotel or restaurant, which is formal and traditional and may require more for this part of an event compare with buffet service. It may also cost more than a buffet as it needs more wait staff to serve the group.

Another type of banquet service type is the buffet service. This service is where the banquet tables and food stations are readily available for guests to go to. This service may require more floor space to provide more rooms for guests to move around from and to the buffet tables. With the buffet service, presentation becomes more economical and can follow more guest interaction compared to an A la Carte service that is normally a plated meal. Then again, an A la Carte service simply means dishes from the menu. Dining in an A la Carte service means a guest is ordering foods from a menu, to a guest's personal preference, instead of accepting a service with a fixed-meal. Guests will get to eat what they personally want, which will be served on their table. A good example of this would be a fine-dining restaurant wherein a wait staff will approach the guest and hand over the menu with written meals and courses to choose from.

Payment options may also be another difference between Banquet/Catering and A la Carte. Banquet/Catering may either need to be paid half of the total

amount or the total amount before the event date. However, an A la Carte service is normally being paid for after dining in.

Similarities between A la Carte and Banquet/Catering

A la Carte and Banquet similarly aims to provide better food experience to guests. Even though each of them has their own way of meal preparation in terms of quantity and equipment being used, both Banquet/Catering and A la Carte are normally cooked and prepared to look nicer when served either in a plate or chafing dish. More importantly, both services restaurants continuously increase their prominence when it comes to personalization and quality of their menus.

Though a guest may not be able to choose his personal dish when in a Banquet/Catering setting, he may still be able to combine different meals that he may choose that are available on the food stations just like selecting his preference from an A la Carte menu. They may have difference in terms of pricing, but a guest may be able to come up with a food combination of his choice according to their availability.

In terms of equipment and utensils being used, both Banquet/Catering and A la Carte may also have some similarities. Depending on the event, a banquet may have similar table settings just like in a fine dining A la Carte service. Kitchen equipment is almost the same in terms of its use such as the oven, deep fryer, and even the stove. These are all being used to cook large quantity of dishes for banquets and different varieties of dishes for an A la Carte setting.