

Advantages and disadvantages of a small kitchen in a busy bistro essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Aim:

The aim of this report is to establish if a small kitchen is an advantage or disadvantage to a busy city bistro. Does a small kitchen make producing high quality cuisine more difficult or is it an advantage. Small cramped conditions or strong sense of common goal? I intend to try and establish this by basing my report on Bleu Bistro of Dawson street, Dublin. I also intend to cover a cleaning roster for the kitchen on request of the head chef as well as some haccp guidelines for the staff.

Introduction:

In any restaurant the kitchen is the heart of the establishment, all paths lead to and from it. And because of its importance many considerations should be made before establishing it. One such consideration is the size, how much can you afford to use and how will it affect the running of the restaurant. I intend to research this point establishing the advantages and disadvantages of a small kitchen with particular reference to Bleu Bistro Dublin.

The Small Kitchen - Bleu:

Despite limited storage and preparation areas, many chefs manage to produce a fine-dining dinner menu that changes seasonally.

Although a small back kitchen houses the dish pit and limited prep space, all the chefs on duty in Bleu remain in the open kitchen throughout service.

Organization is essential during this hectic period. Accordingly, the kitchen is divided into two areas.

The hot section accommodates two lower ovens with 8 burners and a freestanding oven. There is a plating/prep counter with storage on shelves above for tableware as well as electric warmers and fridges underneath for storage. In the cold section, fridge-top cold storage holds items for mise en place and other raw ingredients. There is a free standing freezer and a walk in cold room although walk in is being a bit generous with little room other than standing room.

The attitude within the kitchen seems to be that one can do just about anything from this kitchen. You just have to take the preparation to a certain level so you facilitate service, and they succeed in doing this at a very high level.

Advantages:

When you look into this kitchen one would have to wonder if there are any advantages at all, it is quite small and for the extensive menu that these chefs prepare for it would seem impossible, yet they succeed quite well. The main reasons for this is organization and timing something which they seem to have down to a t. Many of the reasons for this success could also be listed as advantages of this kitchen and I shall outline them below.

a) Stock turnover: due to the size of the kitchen and the lack of storage space, fresh produce arrives each morning. This makes for fresh quality food, which in turn helps to promote a quality food image to the customers as they are always receiving fresh tasty food.

B) Teamwork: within this tight close environment it would be very easy for any chef to lose his cool during service, but in this kitchen the chefs work so close together that strong friendships and respect has developed between them, this in turn helps to prevent tempers flaring as they are all willing to help each other out should one need help. As one of the chefs said while I was there “ there is no I in team”.

c) Monitoring: at all times the Head chef can see what is happening at all stations. With ease he can float from one section to the next to check that everything is running smoothly and efficiently. This makes for the ability of his high standards to be fluid throughout every section.

d) Cleaning: due to the kitchen's size cleaning is a quick and concise affair, at no time can a mess be allowed to build up, as it would severely hamper service operations.

e) Haccap: linked with the above point, as the kitchen has to be tidy through necessity it makes following haccp guidelines, such as “ clean as you go”, much easier to follow. This ensures that if an Environmental Health officer was to call unexpectedly that the kitchen would be up to their strict standards.

f) Equipment: the fact that at no time do the chefs have to walk ages across a large kitchen to get equipment, make the progress during mise en place and service much quicker, also having equipment right at hand makes for less accidents as they are not been carried across a busy kitchen.

Disadvantages:

As it is to be expected a small kitchen comes with its share of problems and disadvantages. Some of which I have outlined below.

a) Storage: storage within a kitchen is much more than a want it is a necessity. And within a small kitchen storage space is at a premium. This creates problems in that the chefs have to be creative with ingredients that have to be used as they come in, they cannot afford to be wasteful so they have to be careful. Also another problem with this is that if a supplier fails to show with an order, the kitchen has to substitute, as it is very unlikely that they have any leftovers from the night before.

b) Work space: within this confined area a brigade of up to seven people at any one time have to manoeuvre around each other this creates difficulties during service when many hot items are floating about at the one time. Without extreme care accidents could happen. Equally during mise en place the chefs have to be extremely aware of what is being prepared beside them in order to avoid cross contamination. A consideration in any kitchen, but more so in a small one as the chefs don't always have the space to strictly have their own work area.

c) Equipment: with the kitchen being so small there is only so much equipment it can hold, this generates a problem in that the chefs are always fighting for that chopping board or that cooking ring. It can be frustrating not being able to find that piece of equipment when you need.

d) Cleaning: as the equipment is sparse it means that all equipment must be cleaned very regularly, not really a problem for small equipment but items like the cooker and oven must be cleaned often which creates added work for the chefs.

e) Staff: a lot of thought must be taken when selecting employees which can be time consuming, and time is a luxury most head chefs don't have. Due to the size of the kitchen the chefs must be versatile and be multi-skilled.

Employees within the kitchen must be kept to a minimum in order to deal with the lack of space, and so multi-skilled chefs go a long way to solve this problem.

Cleaning:

As part of this report the head chef asked me to establish a working roster for the cleaning of the kitchen equipment in compliance with Haccp regulations and so I have evolved a tick sheet system for the cleaning of the restaurant and a set of haccp guidelines for the staff. Also as I was already establishing a tick sheet system I decided to establish one for the delivery system within Bleu, they receive deliveries each morning but I noticed that although they carry out all the necessary checks they didn't have any record of the checks they carried out, therefore I felt it was a necessary item to have in the kitchen.