

Catering questions and concerns surround your Event

When people gather, whether it be for a wedding, a meeting or a fundraiser they often gather around food. Therefore, catering may be one of the most important elements to ensure the success of your event. Elk Point recently spoke with Joe Parras from Parras Catering to gather insight into what an event planner may need to know when booking catering services.

Setting a realistic catering budget for your event is a good place to start. Joe recommends a minimum of \$10.00 per person. Depending on what you are planning to serve this price will more than likely be much higher. Beef and Seafood dishes tend to be on the higher price scale than Chicken or Pasta dishes.

In the State of Idaho caterers are required to be licensed and permitted. Elk Point requires that catering vendors supply all permits related to food preparation. Licensing/Permitting is important for the safety of all guests consuming food at your event.

It is also important to find out from your caterer if they are providing plates, flatware, napkins or serving staff. We have seen many instances where a client chooses a low-cost caterer that provides an inferior product without the extra items that many caterers include in their cost. There is nothing worse than going to serve dinner and realizing the caterer did not provide a plate, a fork or a knife. This happens more often than you think when we see a client choose low cost catering.

Depending on the occasion you may choose to have your catering served buffet style or plated. Buffets are the most common because of price and efficiency in serving guests. A plated dinner will often cost much more than a buffet because of the required staff needed to serve guests and keeping the food warm. According to Joe Parras expect to pay twice as much for a plated catered meal than you would if choosing a buffet.

Joe Parras recommends booking your caterer as far in advance as possible. Once the venue is booked, the caterer is usually the next item on the list. Good caterers, and venue's, often book up to a year in advance.

Choosing what to serve at your event can be difficult with a wide array of choices. Cost is often the determining factor when making this decision. While appetizers are a great idea that provides choices, appetizers often cost more than a traditional meal. Pasta can go a long way and keep your costs down. Meat dishes are the most traditional. Joe Parras recommends choosing something that is easy to eat without getting messy, especially at a wedding or formal event. It is also important to communicate to your caterer any dietary issues you may be trying to accommodate for a guest.

From the venue perspective, it is important to choose a caterer that is familiar with the venue. Caterers can provide recommendations based on previous experience and the strength/weaknesses of the venue. Weather is one of the largest concerns caterers have, according to Joe Parras. Is the food set indoors, outdoors, in a shady or sunny area?

What to do with the leftover food? Some caterers do not have a leftover policy. This means they will remove any leftover food you have already paid for. Others believe since you paid for the food, you are welcome to take it with you. Some caterers bring to go boxes/bags for the client, while others put this responsibility on the client. This is an important item to discuss with your caterer.

There are many choices to consider when it comes to catering for your event. Parras Catering and Elk Point are happy to help direct you to the choice that is best for your event. We look forward to seeing you choice fully on display during your special day.