



Introduction to Food and Catering By Justin Tyme

When considering the hiring of a caterer, be sure to visit **Picasso Catering**, located in Tacoma, Washington and providing food and special event service and catering throughout the South Puget Sound Area.

For more information call **253-475-8333** or visit **www.picasso.catering**

Picasso Catering *“Where Food is Art - From Simple to Sublime”*

“Our venue located at 3822 South Union Avenue can seat approximately 200 people for weddings, social or business events. We have a great dance floor, a stage for live performers as well as an audio system & video projection services along with free Wi-Fi. Of course we can cater your event at the venue of your choice as well.”

Table of Contents

Choosing Foods for Your Special Event – Page 3

Cheese – Page 5

English Cheeses - The Glory Of Vintage Stilton – Page 6

Culinary Traditions of France – Page 8

British Cuisine – Page 10

Delicious Desserts – Page 12

Should I Hire a Caterer – Page 13

Choosing Foods for Your Special Event

By Justin Tyme

Choosing the right menu for a special event can be just as important as choosing a location. Food can communicate a theme, convey a feeling or set the mood of an entire night. If you are planning a high-class extravaganza, hot dogs and beer might not be appropriate. However, they might be the perfect choice for a birthday party at the lake. Taking great care in planning a menu shows your guests how much you appreciate them, and a great meal can help make a special day even more memorable.

If you are planning a birthday party for your child, an interactive meal can be a fun activity for your guests. Rather than slaving away in the kitchen all day or spending countless dollars ordering pizzas, you can save time and money by letting the guests make their own special creations. One fun idea is to prepare a multitude of toppings and let the children make their own bagel or English muffin pizzas. They will have a blast piling on strange combinations of toppings, and they will enjoy feeling like grown-ups in the kitchen.

For a more formal occasion like a holiday party, finger foods can be great for mingling guests, and they can be great topics of conversation. The obligatory finger sandwich can be spiced up by adding your own special pesto or cheese spread to an already tried and true recipe. Experiment with different ingredients in the weeks prior to the party, and test them out on your family. You will know when you get the reaction you are looking for, and you might end up spending much of the party writing down your recipe for your guests.

Planning a menu for a wedding can be quite stressful, especially when you are not sure exactly how many guests will be attending. The rule of thumb is that too much is better than not enough, even if it means having a lot of food left over at the end of the night. You can choose to have a buffet-style dinner, or you can have a set menu for your guests. It is important to consider your guests with special dietary needs. You should have vegetarian

and low-sodium alternatives to your main courses, and you should have a heart-healthy menu for those who must avoid foods with high fat contents.

Before attempting a large-scale meal, you should make all of the dishes several times to perfect your recipes. Your goal is to have guests asking for more even after it all runs out. Test your creations on a variety of people and make adjustments according to their suggestions. When cooking food from your own recipes, it is important to remember the details of what you did every time you make it. That way you will know what went wrong when something turns out horrible, and more importantly what went right when you receive raving reviews.

Planning portions is the most important part of catering your own party. Though most recipes tell you how many people they will feed, it is best to err on the side of caution. If a recipe feeds eight, you might want to count it as six or seven, depending on how many guests you expect. Plan that half of your guests will want to go back for seconds. If you know that one dish will be a favorite, be sure to make extra. Though the green beans may be the healthier option, you can usually bet that the cheesecake will go a lot quicker. Keep in mind that the greater the variety, the more people you will please, so even if you are a steamed vegetable lover, you should probably prepare some beefy options for your less than health conscious guests.

Cheese

By Justin Tyme

Legend has it that an unknown Arab nomad accidentally discovered cheese. He embarked upon a horseback journey across the desert filled with a saddlebag of milk. When he stopped to rest, the milk had separated into curds and whey. The logical explanation to this occurrence is the functioning of rennin. The bacteria were present in the saddlebag, which was made from the stomach of a young animal.

Cheese has been a popular food for centuries and has also been mentioned in the Old Testament. Even today, inducing various types of bacteria into milk transform it to cheese. The bacteria in time works on the milk and, depending upon the different types used, specific textures and flavors of cheese are determined.

Cheese is always manufactured from milk. Milk from cattle (cows, sheep, and goats) is used at all times. Cheese textures vary from hard to semi-soft and from mildly acidic to sharp. There are hundreds of different types of cheese available. Primarily, they are classified based upon 4 factors. These include type of milk used (raw, skimmed or pasteurized) and the source of the milk (cow, goat, sheep, buffalo, horse, yak or camel). Other factors include type of bacteria or acid used and the country it is made in.

Since cheese is available in such a wide variety, it can be confusing for the consumer to decide what to buy. Stored cheese is a good travel food. It has a long shelf life and contains high fat, protein, calcium, and phosphorus. Cheese can also be eaten in various forms. These include consuming raw, cooked, cold or warm cheese preparations.

English Cheeses - The Glory of Vintage Stilton

By Justin Tyme

Cheese was originally developed as a way of preserving milk. Now cheese is classed as a gourmet food, well, some cheese anyway.

Cheeses from different regions have their own characteristic texture and taste because the conditions that the bacterial fermentation is carried out under differ. Cheese makers can use fresh or pasteurized milk, skimmed or whole milk and add coloring. Different pH levels for the fermentation and different temperatures will all affect the taste and texture of the finished product.

Cheese is a very personal thing. Many people will not have foreign cheese. French people have never heard of the majority of English cheeses. I enjoy French cheese, but I will try anything.

Camembert and Brie are made from pasteurized and from unpasteurized milk. Look for cheeses made from unpasteurized milk. They bear no resemblance to the tasteless and bland pasteurized varieties. Unpasteurized cheese is not suitable for very young children or the elderly.

English cheese is what I was brought up on. My lunch used to be 1/4 of Lancashire cheese (and a steak and kidney pie). Lancashire cheese is mild, very pale and very crumbly. It is best cut from a whole cheese. Shrink wrapped Lancashire cheese is fine for cooking, but that's all. You can only keep Lancashire cheese for three or four days. The taste deteriorates on exposure to air. Lancashire is the best cheese for making toasted sandwiches, it has a very high melting point.

Red Leicester cheese is another favorite. This has a nutty taste and should have cracks in it. This is another cheese that is infinitely better when freshly cut, rather than shrink wrapped. Red Leicester has better keeping properties than Lancashire and also works well on toasted sandwiches.

Stilton cheese is made in Leicestershire and has blue veins running through it. You can buy mature, extra mature and vintage Stilton. Be aware though that once you have developed a taste for the vintage cheese that you can never go back to the ordinary supermarket variety.

The extra cost for the vintage cheese is not high, yet the taste comparison is unbelievable. You can recognize a good stilton by the rind. It should be about one centimeter thick, crusty and a deep creamy yellow. The cheese itself should be deep yellow with plenty of blue veins through it. Most people do not eat the rind on Stilton, but it is edible.

If you eat vintage stilton without drinking a ten or twenty years old port with it you are missing a taste combination that can only be described as ecstatic. You can judge the quality of the port by how far up your sinuses the taste goes. The best port and Stilton combination I have ever tasted was a 1991 Noval LB with a vintage Stilton. WOW! That made my eyes pop out, the taste sensation went so far up my sinuses.

Culinary Traditions of France

By Justin Tyme

French cuisine is the amazingly high standard to which all other native cuisines must live up to. The country of France is home of some of the finest cuisine in the world, and it is created by some of the finest master chefs in the world. The French people take excessive pride in cooking and knowing how to prepare a good meal. Cooking is an essential part of their culture, and it adds to one's usefulness if they are capable of preparing a good meal.

Each of the four regions of France has a characteristic of its food all its own. French food in general requires the use of lots of different types of sauces and gravies, but recipes for cuisine that originated in the northwestern region of France tend to require the use a lot of apple ingredients, milk and cream, and they tend to be heavily buttered making for an extremely rich (and sometimes rather heavy) meal. Southeastern French cuisine is reminiscent of German food, heavy in lard and meat products such as pork sausage and sauerkraut.

On the other hand, southern French cuisine tends to be a lot more widely accepted; this is generally the type of French food that is served in traditional French restaurants. In the southeastern area of France, the cooking is a lot lighter in fat and substance. Cooks from the southeast of France tend to lean more toward the side of a light olive oil more than any other type of oil, and they rely heavily on herbs and tomatoes, as well as tomato-based products, in their culinary creations.

Cuisine Nouvelle is a more contemporary form of French cuisine that developed in the late 1970s, the offspring of traditional French cuisine. This is the most common type of French food, served in French restaurants. Cuisine Nouvelle can generally be characterized by shorter cooking times, smaller food portions, and more festive, decorative plate presentations. Many French restaurant cuisines can be classified as Cuisine Nouvelle, but the more traditional French restaurant cuisine would be classified as Cuisine du Terroir, a more general form of French cooking than Cuisine Nouvelle. Cuisine du Terroir is an attempt to return to the more indigenous forms of French cooking, especially with reference to regional differences between the north and south, or different areas such as the Loire Valley, Catalonia, and Rousillon. These are all areas famous for their specific specialty of

French cuisine. As time has progressed, the difference between a white wine from the Loire Valley and a wine from another area has slowly diminished, and the Cuisine du Terroir approach to French cooking focuses on establishing special characteristics between regions such as this.

As part of their culture, the French incorporate wine into nearly every meal, whether it is simply as a refreshment or part of the recipe for the meal itself. Even today, it is a part of traditional French culture to have at least one glass of wine on a daily basis.

British Cuisine

By Justin Tyme

British cuisine has always suffered from bad press. The simple homespun fare and plain preparation of most traditional British foods pales when compared to French haute cuisine, and it's not uncommon for food critics to sound almost apologetic when writing about traditional British dishes as if there were something shameful in enjoying a good, thick joint of beef with an accompaniment of Yorkshire pudding. If they speak in glowing terms of anything at all, it is a nod to the clever naming of British foods, where dishes like bubble and squeak and spotted dick appear on restaurant menus.

And yet, for all the snickering and apologetic references, British cuisine at its best is hearty, delicious, simple fare on which to fuel the nation that influenced the entire world. There is no other nation in the world that does a roast of beef to such perfection, nor any better accompaniment to the succulent meat than a puffed, piping hot Yorkshire pudding prepared in its drippings, and few cuisines have a dessert that can compare with the pure heaven that is a well made trifle or treacle tart.

British cuisine is a blending of the practical with the nutritious. If it is, as some say, unimaginative, that may be because the food itself needs little imagination to fancy it up and make it palatable. It is certainly not because the British mind lacks imagination when it comes to food – the common names for everyday meals sometimes require a translator just so you'll know what's on your plate. A walk through a restaurant take-away menu offers such dishes as 'mushy peas', steak and kidney pie, fish and chips and bangers and mash.

There are well-known British dishes for eating at each meal. Some of the most popular include:

Breakfast:

A full English country breakfast includes meat, eggs, pancakes or toast and side dishes like hash and bangers and mash. It's hearty fare, the sort that is set on the table for dinner in most other cultures. It often includes leftovers from last night's dinner, diced and fried together with seasonings and butter, sometimes called country hash.

Tea:

The tradition of mid-afternoon tea is one that's been observed by the British for centuries. Among the most common dishes served at mid-afternoon tea are finger-foods like crumpets with jam and clotted cream, dainty watercress sandwiches and scones with raisins or dried fruits.

Sunday Dinner:

The Sunday dinner has a long tradition as being a family occasion – the one meal of the week at which all family members gathered. A roast joint of meat – beef, lamb, pork or chicken – is nearly a requirement, and it is served with a potato and vegetable, and very often accompanied by Yorkshire pudding.

Puddings and custards feature prominently in British cuisine. Baked, boiled or steamed, puddings are usually made with suet and breading, and studded with dried fruits and nuts. One of the most popular and delightful British desserts is the trifle, and there are nearly as many variations as there are cooks. The base is a sponge cake, often left over from another meal. Soaked in Madeira or port, it is layered in a dish with custard, jam, fruits and Jell-O and topped with whipped cream. The end result is a delicious mélange that is features all that is good about British cookery – plain, practical cooking that is meant to fill the belly and satisfy the taste buds.

Delicious Desserts

By Justin Tyme

A "Dessert" is a meal course that usually comes after dinner. Most often Dessert foods are of sweet food but can also be of a strongly flavored food, such as cheese, like cheese cake. The world dessert comes from the Old French word "desservir", which means 'to clear the table'. Often times in the English language dessert is confused with the word desert(note only one "s"), which is a barren piece of land normally with sand as soil.

It wasn't until after the 19th-century where the rise of the middle class, and the mechanization of the sugar industry, brought the privilege of sweets into the general public and unreserved it exclusively for the aristocracy, or as rare holiday treat. This was because sugar became cheaper and more readily available to the general public. As sugar was widely spread, so was the development and popularity of desserts.

In today's culture dessert recipes have become a popular item for discussion, as they are a winning way to win people over at the end of any meal. This is partly because if you serve a mediocre meal, with an excellent dessert, people will remember you for the dessert and forget about the meal.

Most cultures, have a separate final distinction between the main course, and the sweet course. This is not true however in some cultures such as Chinese, who will mix in sweet and savory dishes throughout the entire meal. Dessert is, often times seen as a separate meal or snack, rather than a course, and can be eaten some time after the meal by many individuals. Because of its wide spread popularity there are even some restaurants that specialize in desserts.

Some of the most common desserts are:

- Biscuits or cookies - Ice creams - Meringues
- Fruit – Cakes – Crumbles - Custards
- Gelatin desserts – Puddings - Pastries
- Pies or tarts

Should I Hire a Caterer

By Justin Tyme

So you have decided to throw a party. Great, now its time to consider all of the things you must do to make it a success. You need to make a guest list, plan decorations, arrange for a DJ, etc, etc. The list goes on and on but one of the most important tasks is arranging for the food. Food and drink will make or break your party. The question you must decide is are you going to hire a caterer or are you going to handle the food yourself. There are pluses and minuses to both.

Catering Yourself

If you decide to cater the party yourself, you will of course save money. Caterers can be expensive and they make up a considerable portion of a parties budget. If you are having a relatively small gathering, it is probably not worth hiring one. You might be better off just buying a few party trays from your grocery store or a favorite restaurant.

Another reason to not hire a caterer is that you will be able to serve exactly what you want, not just what the caterer has to offer. You can have the exact foods that you and your guests like in the amounts that you want.

Hiring a Caterer

Hiring a caterer does have advantages however. Sure they can cost you money but their expertise can come in handy. If you order the food yourself you might over order, wasting money. Even worse you could end up ordering too little and run out of food or drink. That would be a party nightmare, quickly putting an end to the festivities. You want to see a crowded room empty quick, just tell your guests that there is no more food or drink.

Another advantage of hiring a caterer is that it will allow you to completely enjoy your party. No running back and forth to the kitchen or checking to make sure your appetizer tray is full. You can spend your time mingling with your friends or business associates. What good is throwing a party that you cannot enjoy.

Lastly, honestly answer this question. Do you have the expertise to pull it off? Caterers have the experience necessary to make sure that your party goes off smoothly. The food will be ready on time. The drinks will flow

smoothly. They have thrown hundreds or even thousands of parties and they will make yours run like clockwork.

Hopefully this article has helped you decide on the direction you want to take your party. Decide carefully, it is an important decision that could make or break your event.



Introduction to Food and Catering By Justin Tyme

When considering the hiring of a caterer, be sure to visit **Picasso Catering**, located in Tacoma, Washington and providing food and special event service and catering throughout the South Puget Sound Area.

For more information call **253-475-8333** or visit www.picassocatering.com

Picasso Catering *“Where Food is Art - From Simple to Sublime”*

“Our venue located at 3822 South Union Avenue can seat approximately 200 people for weddings, social or business events. We have a great dance floor, a stage for live performers as well as an audio system & video projection services along with free Wi-Fi. Of course we can cater your event at the venue of your choice as well.”