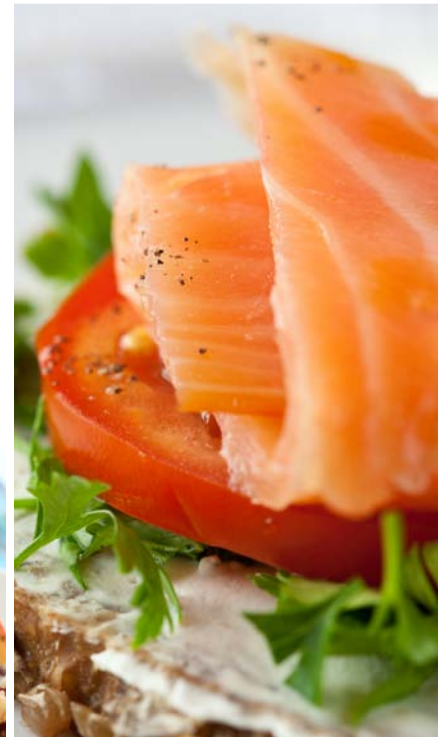




15

catering tips that
caterers may not
tell you.



ezcater

1 One entrée per event saves you money

When offered two entrées, people want to try both, so they take more food than they would when offered just one. The food will run out! Protect yourself by ordering 30% more of the entrées (though not of the side dishes). Obviously, you'll spend less money and waste less food if you stick with one entrée.

One exception: if you order the two entrées in very different amounts. Let's say you want BBQ pork for your group of 50. It's seldom safe to order just pork for a group, so you'll want some BBQ chicken, too. You usually will be OK with pork for 45 and chicken for 10—just a 10% overage. But if you split the entrée evenly

(25 pork/25 chicken), you'll need the 30% overage. Ditto for a vegetarian option alongside a meat meal. It helps to label the smaller dish. A neat, hand-lettered sign saying that the chicken is for non-pork eaters will keep the nibbling down.

2 Order locally

You're generally better off with the caterer closest to the office. The food can arrive fresher, there is less opportunity for traffic delays, and delivery fees are often smaller.

Note: ezCater automatically offers you caterers sorted by distance.





3 Choose wisely for very long lunches

Sterno and chafing dishes can keep food warm for 30 to 60 minutes. If there is a microwave available, Chinese food can be a good option because it reheats well. Nonetheless, for offices that eat in shifts across 2 or 3 hours, choose foods that hold their heat well, such as casserole-type dishes, or where heat doesn't matter, such as sandwiches.

4 Appearances matter

If you get a lull, take a moment to “dress up” the table. Scrape together the food in a serving dish so it looks more inviting and holds its temperature better. Consolidate foods from multiple serving dishes, as appropriate. Police the area for empty containers and used plates, utensils, cups, and napkins.

5 Get written confirmation

With any order there's a risk of miscommunication or error. It's a good idea to have and review a written confirmation of your order.

Note: ezCater emails you a detailed confirmation with every order.



6 Think beyond salads for vegetarians



Meat entrées

Vegetarians can be included if you order sides that contain protein, such as baked beans, corn, or mac & cheese.



Fajita or taco bars

Add sides of beans and rice to give vegetarians everything they need.



Salads

Search out options with nuts, sunflower seeds, beans, chickpeas, or tofu for a welcome change from the usual cheese.



Quiches, casseroles, and pasta dishes

These options can be very tasty vegetarian dishes that the whole group can enjoy.



Potato, soup, and salad bars

Everyone enjoys these, and they can be nutritious, filling, and—especially for potato and soup bars—memorably comforting.

7 Choose carefully when ordering make-your-own

Most offices prefer assortments of pre-made sandwiches to platters of cold cuts. But make-your-own salad bars, potato bars, and Mexican bars are very popular and cost-effective as well.

8 Be savvy about tipping

If the delivery fee is less than \$1 per mile, the driver is relying on tips, especially with today's gas prices. A tip of at least \$1 per mile is tremendously appreciated. If your order is large (requiring multiple treks to and from the delivery van) or last-minute (requiring a scramble to fit you in), consider tipping as high as 10% or 15% of the food cost. You'll get the best service this way.

Note: ezCater shows you the distance a caterer has to travel.



9 Pork is great, but...

...not everyone can eat it. Don't serve all pork to a group unless you know that will be OK. Be safe by also offering some chicken. For a group of 30, you will usually be fine with pork for 24 and chicken for 8—just a 10% overage. But be careful about splitting the entrée in half. See our first tip, “One entrée per event saves you money.”



10 Take advantage of professional expertise

Once you've picked your entrée, it's a great idea to let the caterer choose the sides and desserts. They know the most popular and memorable combinations. Plus, you'll get the best deal. Since reputation matters a lot to caterers, you can trust they will make good choices.

11 Individual servings or family style

If the office's break room is small, the office will appreciate box lunches because they take less space than a family style—or buffet—setup.

But, you may get less facetime if your clients can just grab a lunch and go. Here's a tip: order an assortment of box lunches, and ask the caterer to label them. Arrive early to familiarize yourself with where each type of lunch is. Position yourself so you're helping people choose and get the type of lunch they like—a good conversation-starter.



12 Order seasonally



Get the tastiest food — and make the caterer happy, which benefits you, too — by ordering foods that fit the season. Try turkey and cranberry in the fall, salad and fruit in summer, and hot pasta dishes in winter.

13 Double-check everything

It's much safer to call the caterer again on the day of the event. Reconfirm each order and remind the caterer of your special needs (“no onions!”) and instructions (“the break room is in the basement”).

Note: When you order through ezCater, we do this double-confirmation for you.

14 Shine on dark days

If you know it's likely to be raining or cold on the day of your event, bring comfort foods: pot pie, lasagna, shepherd's pie, casseroles, soup. Or, if the caterer can do it, treat the office to a summer repast of hot dogs and burgers in February to perk everyone up!



15 Save money by not over-ordering

You want enough food, but why waste any? Truth is, some offices over-order, and many caterers over-deliver. If the office gives you a range, order for the lower end of the range. If it's Friday or summertime, you might be able to trim the headcount a bit further. A few guidelines:

Note: You'll find many of these guidelines incorporated into each ezCater menu.



Side salads

With light entrées, order a side garden salad for just $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ of your headcount. If the entrée is large or already includes sides, reduce the side salad even further. Of course, if some guests are vegetarian or salad buffs, adjust accordingly.



Chips

Not everyone eats chips, but some people eat two bags. Order for at least 85% of your headcount. Pretzels or baked chips are often appreciated, but check carefully; they can cost more.



Other sides

When ordering pasta/broccoli/potato salads by the pound, remember that some foods are much more dense than others. A pound of potato salad will look much smaller than a pound of pasta salad, and it will not stretch as far.



Desserts

Most guests appreciate a treat, and many will thank you for offering smaller sizes. Request that brownies, bars, or cookies be cut in half, and order half as many. For cakes and pies that serve "x-y people," calculate based on the higher number.



Drinks

A gallon of tea or lemonade serves 10 people at lunch, except on the hottest summer days. At breakfast, a gallon of juice can serve 12 to 15 people.



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