

Overview of Food and Beverage Service

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Designed as a quick-reference guide for students, trainees, and new staff.

1. Core Concepts

Term	Definition	Typical Setting
Food & Beverage (F&B) Service	The complete process of preparing, presenting, and delivering food and drinks to guests, from order taking to bill settlement.	Hotels, restaurants, cafés, banquets, cruise ships, catering events
Front-of-House (FOH)	All guest-facing areas and staff (host/hostess, servers, bartenders, bussers).	Dining room, bar, lobby lounge
Back-of-House (BOH)	Kitchen, pantry, storage, and support staff (chefs, line cooks, dishwashers).	Kitchen, walk-in coolers, prep stations
Service Styles	The method by which food and drinks are delivered.	Table service, counter service, buffet, room service, self-service, gueridon (cart) service, family-style

2. Service Styles – Quick Comparison

Style	Guest Interaction	Typical Venue	Key Advantages
À la Carte	Server takes individual orders; dishes prepared to order.	Fine-dining restaurants	High customization, premium pricing
Table Service	Server presents menus, takes orders, serves courses, clears.	Most sit-down restaurants, hotels	Personal attention, upselling opportunities
Buffet	Guests serve themselves from a spread; staff replenish.	Hotels, conferences, all-you-can-eat restaurants	Speed, variety, cost-control
Counter Service	Guests order at a counter; food is delivered to the table or taken away.	Fast-casual, cafés, deli counters	Low labor cost, quick turnover

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Style	Guest Interaction	Typical Venue	Key Advantages
Room Service	Orders placed via phone/online; delivered to guest rooms.	Hotels, cruise ships	Convenience, privacy
Gueridon (Cart) Service	Food prepared or finished on a movable cart at the table.	High?end restaurants, banquet events	Showmanship, fresh presentation
Family?Style	Large platters placed on the table; guests serve themselves.	Casual dining, banquet, some ethnic restaurants	Social interaction, reduced server steps

3. Service Flow – Step?by?Step Process

1. Pre?Opening

- Check reservations, floor plan, and special requests.
- Set tables (linens, flatware, glassware, menus).
- Verify station supplies (condiments, napkins, POS terminals).

2. Guest Reception

- Greet guests promptly (within 30?seconds).
- Verify reservation, seat guests, present menus, and introduce specials.

3. Order Taking

- Use open?ended questions to clarify preferences.
- Confirm dietary restrictions/allergies.
- Repeat the order back for accuracy.

4. Order Transmission

- Enter orders into the POS system or relay to the kitchen via ticket/wireless device.
- Note any special instructions (e.g., “no salt”, “gluten?free”).

5. Food & Drink Preparation

- Kitchen follows mise en place, timing, and plating standards.
- Bar prepares cocktails, coffee, or specialty drinks.

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6. Service of Courses

- **First Course** – Serve promptly after preparation; clear plates when finished.
- **Subsequent Courses** – Follow the same cycle, maintaining appropriate temperature and timing.