

Section 3: Menu Planning and Design

**(Meets learning outcomes
2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 16)**

What is a menu?

To the customer

1. It communicates the operation's image
2. Contributes to the overall dining experience
3. Helps to build interest

To the employees

1. the range of food items served in an establishment, organised into a number of courses
2. an arrangement by which the items are offered
3. a physical object that lists food items, courses and options, drafted up for customers to choose from.

To the manager

It acts as sales tool that directs the customers what to buy.

It is a means by which to identify what food and beverages must be purchased.

It acts as a guide to the types of equipment needed.

It helps to establish the number of chefs required and the skill level required of the workers.

Origin of menus

1. Originally known as the “bill of fare” or “menu”.
2. The word is French in origin and means “a detailed list”.
3. Today the menu is a selling point of an establishment.

Classification of menus

- á la carte children's menu
- table d'hôte beverage menu
- buffet menu
- function/banquet
- Cycle
- dujour menu
- static menu
- Degustation menu
- wine menu/list

á la carte:

1. offers a range of choices within each course
2. items individually priced (you only pay for what you eat)
3. items cooked to order
4. customers structure meal any way they choose
5. dessert menu often presented separately at the end of meal

table d'hôte:

- offers limited choices between courses
- offered at a fixed price (whether you eat each course or not)
- may be offered 2 courses at a set price or 3 courses at a higher set price
- generally no additional choices and no substitutions

buffet menu:

1. is a system of serving meals in which food is placed in a public area
2. diners serve themselves
3. popular for serving large numbers of people with minimal staff

function/banquet

a meal, usually lunch or dinner, prepared and served by the hotel exclusively for a group

cycle:

- refers to several menus offered in rotation
- a series of table d'hôte menus offered in rotation

dujour menu:

- a group of food items served only on that day (du jour means “of the day”)
- Specials of the day

static menu:

- is used for several months (or longer) before being replaced with a new one

degustation menu:

- a degustation menu lists a range of items, usually specialities of the establishment, which are served in small portions
- May be referred to as taster menu

children's menu:

- offers small portions for less money
- healthy choices may be available
- menu often printed with colours and characters

beverage menu: split into different categories

- pints/half ones
- beer
- spirits
- ciders
- liquors
- shots
- splits

wine menu/list

- wines listed by Red/white/rosé/sparkling/champagne
- Country/origin named
- dry, medium or sweet in character
- year of wine and price typically shown
- House wine – usually cheaper

considerations in compiling a menu

- type, size of the establishment
- competition, price, quality
- estimated customer spend
- food trends, season, local availability
- special dietary requirements
- time available
- number eating
- Nutrition
- Cooking methods/contrast
- space and equipment available
- staff capacity
- costs

financial considerations

- financial implications
- menu structure and design

financial implications

- pricing and cost structure
- size and type of the menu
- quality of food and beverage offered
- food costs and portion control
- Labour, rent, rates, fuel, equipment etc

menu structure and design

- menu writing
- layout
- format
- typeface
- artwork (illustrations, photos, colour)
- Paper
- cover
- language (easy to understand, correct spelling and cookery terms used)

common mistakes when compiling a menu

- lack of specials
- menu is printed too small
- menus that are too crowded
- use of uncommon terminology without clarification
- every item treated the same
- some of operation's food and beverages are not listed
- basic information about the property and its policies not included
- printed menus with hand-written changes

Restaurant menus

- <http://www.rinuccini.com/menus/rinuccini-early-bird/>
- http://bodegawaterford.com/en/dinner/a_la_carte_menu