

SARASOTA CATERING COMPANY



Fabulous Food Service with Style

Party Planning Guide

**6544 Superior Avenue
Sarasota, Florida 34231**

**Phone: 941.927.7675
Fax: 941.927.7672**

www.SarasotaCateringCompany.com

**Where to begin?
How much do I need?
What else do I consider?
Where can I get help?
How can I trim the budget?**



Where to Begin?

Be clear about the purpose and the type of party/event

Your party may involve a special occasion such as a birthday, anniversary, or perhaps a wedding rehearsal dinner. It may just be getting a few friends together from around the neighborhood or you may want to invite hundreds of guests to kick off a fund raising campaign. Think about how you want the event to be experienced. Write this out for your edification and for reference as the plans evolve. This will frame your approach to planning your party. If there is no specific occasion, maybe you want to have a theme such as Mardi Gras, casino night or Bastille Day.

Set the Budget

Once you've determined the purpose of the party, determine your budget and whether it is to be a strict parameter or a guideline. Factors affecting the cost of the party will include the number of guests, specialization of the menu, professionally prepared or home-made food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, rented items, decorations, entertainment and hired help. Remember, you don't have to spend a fortune to make your guests feel good. Decide what's important to you and how you prefer to spend the budget you are setting.

Set the Date and Time of the Party

The date of your party will dictate how far in advance you'll need to send out invitations, reserve equipment, and contract with service providers such as caterers and entertainers. Holidays and high season dates require the most advance notice. Selecting a weekend as your party date may require more advance notice than selecting a weekday.

The season of the year affects the availability of some ingredients, a consideration in your menu. Some fruit, vegetables, and shellfish, for example, have periods when they may not be available or are not in prime condition.

The time of year also affects whether you have to deal with heat, cold, winds or rain. So if you're planning to be outside, rental items such as tents, fans and different serving pieces may be needed to deal with the elements.

The time of day is another determinant of the menu and budget. Is it a breakfast, a specialty brunch, a light lunch, an elegant dinner, a buffet of hearty hors d'oeuvres or simple appetizers? Timing will also determine the array of beverages such as juices, sodas, tea, or cocktails.

Determine the Number of People

The number of people invited or anticipated is directly proportional to the quantities of food and drink as well as the space needed to hold the event. Can you fit all your guests in your home or does the party need to be held in another location or out-of-doors? Can you seat your guests comfortably around your dinner table or do you need to offer buffet service and lap trays? Will everyone have a place to sit during the event?

The number of people invited also affects the menu. The more people, the simpler the menu should be.

Creating a guest list can be a challenge! You want to select guests for a combination of traits that will make for interesting conversation and support your purpose for the party. This is especially



significant at a seated dinner party. Consider using place cards to facilitate individual contributions as well as to enhance the engagement and interactions among your guests.

Determine the Type of Service

How formal do I want the party to be? Formality dictates the type of invitations, the dress of your guests, and the type of food service. Formality impacts the environment of the event and thus, is to be considered in the purpose of the party. Choices for food service include:

- *Plated Service* – The food is stylistically arranged on each plate and then served to your guests. The plates can be decorated elaborately while easily controlling portion sizes. You can have as many courses as you wish but three or four is the typical number - soup or salad, entrée with a sauce and two side dishes, and a dessert. The appetizer course is optional especially if hors d'oeuvres were served before dinner.
- *Russian Service* – The food is brought to the table on trays and placed on the guests' plates by servers. This is most elegant when served by experienced wait staff but it is labor intensive and takes time for everyone to be served. This type of service is optimal for a small number of guests when three courses are planned.
- *Family Style* – The food is brought to the table in serving dishes and passed around the table or served by the host. In this traditional style, portion sizes cannot be controlled since each guest decides on an amount. Family style is usually served in two courses; entrée, side dishes, salad, and then dessert.
- *Casual Buffet* – The food is displayed on a buffet table and guests serve themselves. Portion size cannot be controlled. Typically staff is needed to replenish selections as the dishes are emptied. This is cost effective for large groups. Buffets usually offer at least two entrees with a variety of side dishes. A small dinner party served buffet style may only have one entrée.
- *Formal Buffet* – The food is presented on a buffet table with wait staff serving the guests. Since food is served, portions can be controlled. This is cost effective for large groups when expensive entrees are selected. Several servers may be needed but the formal buffet offers a level of elegance that cannot be achieved in a casual buffet setting.
- *Buffet and Tray* – Hors d'oeuvres are presented on trays by servers while the other courses are presented on a buffet table. This type of service is efficient and effective for large groups. The servers provide a flavor of elegance, particularly with specialty hors d'oeuvres.
- *Mixed Service* – The food is presented in a combination of buffet and seated service. The buffet is particularly effective for serving hors d'oeuvres and/or dessert since it allows the guests to mingle while the seated courses can be as elegant as desired. Mixed Service is particularly effective for fund-raisers where guests may review items for bid/purchase during the buffet(s) and listen to a program or participate in an auction during the seated service.

Determine the Type of Food

First select the entrée(s) when you are considering food for your gathering. The challenge of pleasing all the guests seems less difficult if you have that focus. The event may suggest a specific food such as turkey on Thanksgiving. Theme parties make the entrée selection more straightforward but it may be more challenging to make the preparation/presentation of the entrée

6544 Superior Avenue Sarasota, FL 34231

Tel. 941.927.7675 Fax 941.927.7671

www.SarasotaCateringCompany.com



outstanding or unique. For a casual get-together with friends, try something different from your usual. If you always serve spaghetti, try other pasta dishes such as ravioli or lasagna. If you frequently serve beef, use a different cut and a different sauce.

Buffets, whether casual or formal, usually provide two entrees and multiple side dishes. Because these are prepared for larger groups with diverse eating preferences, be sure to include some buffet items for vegetarian and diet-restricted guests. When you are selecting hors d'oeuvres, omit those containing the same ingredient as the entrée.

How Much Do I Need?

Hors d'Oeuvres

The number of hors d'oeuvres to be presented is proportional to the length of social time allotted before the meal/event/meeting. For evening events, it usually varies from 45 minutes to 2 hours. Hors d'oeuvres pieces should be no more than two bites in size.

- In the late morning or noontime with a meal following, plan for 1 – 3 pieces per person. Use lighter types of food such as vegetables, cheese or filled puff pastry.
- For evening cocktails when no dinner is offered, plan 10 – 15 pieces per person. Use a mix of substantial food types presented in bite sizes.
- When evening cocktails are to be followed by dinner, plan 3 – 5 pieces per person per hour. Use lighter foods such as vegetables, cheese or a protein you are not serving at dinner.

Drinks

- Plan for 3 beverages per person.
- There are 5 glasses of wine in a 750 ml bottle, each containing 5 ounces. Wine glasses should never be filled all the way. A technique to practice in serving wine is to measure 5 ounces of water and pour it into a wine glass to see how much it fills your glass. You'll then know how much wine to pour during the party.
- One 750 ml bottle of liquor yields approximately 16 servings of 1½ ounces each. A jigger measures 1½ ounces while a shot glass measures 1 ounce. You should instruct your bartender how you want the drinks mixed: using a jigger exactly, loosely, or pouring free hand. You will get the most out of the bottle of liquor if the bartender uses a measure.
- When using 8 ounce glasses, plan for 4 glasses from each 1 liter bottle.
- You can assume approximately 4 ounces of mixer per cocktail. The amount of mixer needed is difficult to estimate because it depends on the glass size, the amount of ice put into each glass and how heavily the liquor is poured.
- Plan on 1 pound of ice per person for drinks.
- Use 1½ cups of coffee per person as a planning guide. Remember to include sugar, artificial sweetener and cream.

Breakfast

Rarely are hors d'oeuvres served at breakfast. Plan to serve 2 beverages per person. They may include juice, coffee, tea, champagne, mimosas, screwdrivers or bloody marys.

A breakfast entrée is usually 5 ounces, with 2 –3 side dishes (4 oz each), bread or starch, and a dessert, such as fruit.

SARASOTA CATERING COMPANY



Fabulous Food Service with Style

Lunch

At lunch, hors d'oeuvres are optional, but if you do serve them, plan 2 – 4 pieces per person. Plan to serve 2 beverages per person. These can include juice, coffee, tea, soda, beer, wine or mixed drinks. Luncheon entrées are usually 5 ounces with 2 – 3 side dishes (4 oz each). Bread and dessert are part of the usual fare.

Dinner

Depending on the number of dinner courses being served, 3 – 5 hors d'oeuvres are planned for each person along with beverages such as soda, sparkling water, beer, wine, or mixed drinks. Wine, tea and water with a slice of lemon are offered with dinner. Coffee can either be served with dessert or later. After-dinner drinks such as cognac, whiskey or liqueur are optional. The dinner menu includes appetizer, soup or salad, a 6 – 8 ounce entrée, 2 – 3 side dishes and a dessert, either sweet or cheeses with fruit. Include bread and butter preferably made with fresh herbs. Optionally, a sorbet may be served between courses to cleanse the palate; a nut, truffle or candy tray follows dessert.

What Else Do I Consider?

Invitations

Invitations set the tone for the party, whether they are verbal or written. A verbal invitation typically is for a small, informal gathering. For larger and less casual events, a written invitation will provide not only essential information about the event but will also set the level of formality. Invitations should be sent out two to three weeks prior for a social event and four weeks for a business or formal event. Save-the-date postcards increase the probability that the intended guests will be available and are mailed a month or two before the invitation. This is especially important for galas or fundraisers where publicity is key to the event.

If you use a verbal invitation, put together a script that you can follow so you don't forget any of the details. For formal written invitations, check with an invitation specialists or a book on etiquette for the proper format and wording.

Party Equipment

Party equipment includes items such as tables, linens, table skirts, paper goods, dishes, serving utensils, serving dishes, extra chairs, chair covers/cushions, tents, umbrellas, beverage coolers and games.

When you are trying to determine how many tables are needed or how many people you can fit comfortably at your dining table, the standard is two linear feet of space per person. This includes the ends of the tables as well.

Typical table sizes:

24 inch round (cocktail or bistro size)	Seats 2 / 3 casually (not for full meal service)
36 inch round (cocktail)	Seats 4 casually
60 inch round or square	Seats 8 / 10 with a squeeze
60 inch square	Seats 8
72 inch round	Seats 10 / 12 with a squeeze
72 X 30 inch rectangular	Seats 8
96 X 30 inch rectangular	Seats 10 / 12 with a squeeze

6544 Superior Avenue Sarasota, FL 34231

Tel. 941.927.7675 Fax 941.927.7671

www.SarasotaCateringCompany.com

SARASOTA CATERING COMPANY



Fabulous Food Service with Style

Linens

Tables are generally between 28 to 30 inches high; therefore, add 56 to 60 inches to the diameter of a round table for floor-length table cloth coverage. For rectangular tables, use a 156 x 90 inch cloth, boxing the corners. Alternatively, use two smaller table cloths. For dramatic effect, you can add a smaller square cloth over the first one to create contrasting colors. Table skirts for buffet or service tables can be attached to the edges of the table. These skirts are not satisfactory for dining tables because they stand up at the table's edge, possibly being dislodged by a guest during the course of the meal.

Linen napkins are necessary for all but the most casual events. Exceptions include paper cocktail napkins for beverages and hors d'oeuvres. Extra linen napkins are used in breadbaskets, for wrapping wine bottles, covering drink or serving trays, and by servers in case of spills.

Food Heating / Holding

Food being served warm, especially on a buffet table, needs to be kept warm. This is accomplished easily with chafing dishes, which come in different sizes and styles, ranging from wire racks and aluminum foil pans to silver plated dishes. Whichever you choose, they use Canned Heat such as Sterno. These items can be bought from party stores or rented from equipment rental sources.

A warming tray is another device that can keep food warm or crispy without drying it out. These can be purchased or rented inexpensively.

Coffeemaker

Coffee is served at most meals. For 10 people, you will serve about 15 cups of coffee. If you purchase a coffeemaker, choose one that can handle at least 24 cups. It can also be used for mulled wine or cider. Otherwise, invest in an insulated carafe so that the temperature of the coffee can be maintained while the next pot is brewing.

Serving Utensils

Every plate or bowl requires a serving spoon, fork or knife. Cake or pie requires a serving knife. Cheese should have a knife to cut cheese or toothpicks to pick up the cheese if it is already cut. Cream cheese should have a spreader. Soup should have a ladle with a handle that is large enough not to slide into the tureen or pot. Tongs can be used to pick up meat, shrimp or vegetables. Spatulas can be used for cake, pie or hamburgers.

Dishes and Flatware

At a dinner party, you will need plates and flatware for each course. If you do not have enough pieces, you can leave the flatware on the table when the dishes are picked up. Have enough dishes for each course to avoid the need to wash them between courses. On a buffet table, expect the guests to use new dishes for each trip to the buffet.

If you rent dishes and flatware, allow one extra place setting of flatware and dishes for every 10 guests in the event something is dropped or broken. For a buffet, plan on one dinner plate and one salad plate for the main course and a third plate for dessert.

6544 Superior Avenue Sarasota, FL 34231

Tel. 941.927.7675 Fax 941.927.7671

www.SarasotaCateringCompany.com



Space Planning

Planning a party is not only about the food but where to place the guests, the buffet table and the wine or beverage station. Decisions about these placements should include consideration for how to avoid congestion and how to encourage mixing. You want your guests to be comfortable and have a good time. The key is to match your group's size to the space selected. If the space is too small, guests may feel claustrophobic and unable to be served adequately. If the space is too large, guests may feel isolated and disconnected.

The following guidelines will help the room be more comfortable.

- When using more than one dining table in a room, allow at least 2 feet between the chair backs of each table.
- Add 3 feet to the diameter of a table to determine the space required for a table and chairs.
- Provide seating for at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the guests at a casual buffet.
- Use screens or dividers, if the room is oversized, in order to make the room feel smaller and provide some intimacy.
- Standup cocktail tables can be used when there is limited space.
- Consider using additional seating in your home other than dining table/chairs. Use sofas, piano benches, living-room chairs, or folding chairs, and provide lap trays or TV trays as surfaces to make the eating experience more enjoyable.
- If you are going to have dancing at your party, make sure that you have left adequate space for a dance floor.
- Buffet tables should have access from both sides, if possible, to speed access.
- Buffet tables should have plenty of space around them because guests are likely to congregate there.
- Buffet tables should not be placed next to a doorway since they will interfere with guests moving from room to room.
- Consider having buffet food placed in two or more locations to speed access. (This is especially important for parties with a large number of guests.)
- The bar should be well lighted and visible from the doorway; however, it should be away from the doorway to avoid congestion. Provide a trash receptacle for empty bottles, used napkins and half-finished drinks.

Selecting a Venue

You may want to hold your event at a specific venue such as a museum or on the beach. Remember that each venue has advantages and disadvantages. Consulting with a local caterer or event planner can tell you about the idiosyncrasies of the desired location. Public venues such as museums or historic homes typically:

- Charge a fee for usage.
- May have a list of authorized caterers.
- Have strict requirements about service providers, setup, operation, and breakdown of the event.
- May restrict where food can be prepared or served

6544 Superior Avenue Sarasota, FL 34231

Tel. 941.927.7675 Fax 941.927.7671

www.SarasotaCateringCompany.com

SARASOTA CATERING COMPANY



Fabulous Food Service with Style

- May require alcoholic beverages be purchased from them.
- May require a liqueur license and insurance if liquor is served by others
- May require vendors, such as caterers to pay a fee (usually 10% of food sales) to the facility for the privilege of providing food. You will end up paying this additional fee either as a service charge on the caterer's contract or it will mean higher food charges.

If the beach or park is a desired venue, you may need a permit and alcoholic beverages may not be served. You should understand the restrictions before you sign a contract for the venue.

Lastly, caterers usually carry liability insurance for their delivery vehicles, services, and liquor service. Some venues will not allow a caterer to provide food on their premises if they can not show proof of insurance. Make sure your caterer has appropriate insurance for your event.

Entertaining Outside

Outdoor entertaining provides space and an atmosphere that your home or a rented hall cannot. It is important, however, to anticipate what the weather will be like on the day of your party and to plan what you will do if it is not what you expected.

Is it too warm?

- Rent or borrow umbrellas, fans or canopies, especially over a buffet.
- Schedule the party for a cooler part of the day.
- Provide cool drinks at a table where guests can serve themselves.
- Provide extra ice and water.

Is it too cold?

- Rent space heaters.
- Serve warm food, spicy food and warm drinks.
- Start an evening event as early as possible.
- Use active music to encourage dancing.
- Use hot colors to trick the senses into feeling warmer.

Is it too windy?

- Make sure all items are secured so they don't blow around. This includes flowers, linens, and décor items. Avoid umbrellas or other decorations that could suffer wind damage or hurt the guests.
- Use table settings that don't require tablecloths or have the cloths weighted down.
- Avoid candles or open flames.
- Locate the party next to a building or fence that offers some protection from the wind.

Is it likely to rain?

- Rent a tent or a shelter. If the cost is prohibitive, consider moving the party indoors.

Are there likely to be ants, mosquitoes, gnats, love bugs, flies or no-see-ums?

- Arrange insect repellent candles and incense around guest seating areas.
- Spray the area prior to the party with insecticide or repellent.
- Place ant traps around the perimeter of the party area prior to the party.

6544 Superior Avenue Sarasota, FL 34231

Tel. 941.927.7675 Fax 941.927.7671

www.SarasotaCateringCompany.com

SARASOTA CATERING COMPANY



- Use plants like garlic, mint or zinnias.
- Place bowls of dry ice around the perimeter of the party to attract mosquitoes and flies.
- Provide covers or screens to cover food.

Is it on a lawn?

- Check that all sprinklers have been turned off.
- Provide mats where women with high heels can stand, or, in the invitation, recommend that women wear flats.

Are there noise or time restrictions?

- Check if noise from your party will carry to surrounding homes or businesses. Find out if there are noise or time restrictions. Do you need a special permit or permission for this location?
- Check the location at the time you plan on having your event to determine if noise from the street or surrounding businesses will interfere with the party.

Is there adequate lighting?

- Find out if there will be electrical outlets for electric lighting.
- Use candles in paper bags that have been weighted with sand to illuminate paths or walkways.
- Use candles or hurricane lamps to illuminate buffets and guest tables.
- Use kerosene lanterns.

Are there adequate restroom facilities?

- Many park or beach areas do not provide restrooms or they may be locked. Check to see what facilities are available during the hours of the party.
- Rent a portable toilet if it is not cost-prohibitive.

Parking

Depending on the party location, parking may be a problem. Encourage your guests not to bring their car, inform them of available parking or provide a valet parking service. If you are near a public garage, guests could be given parking passes to pay for all or part of the fee. If your neighborhood restricts parking, contact the local police, alderman, or commissioner to obtain special permission or a permit.

Where Can I Get Help?

Specialized Service Providers

When the scope of the event exceeds your capabilities and facilities, or if you want to make your role easier, consider using specialized service providers. You will be successful when you understand the extent of each provider's service and what they will charge for it.

6544 Superior Avenue Sarasota, FL 34231
Tel. 941.927.7675 Fax 941.927.7671
www.SarasotaCateringCompany.com

SARASOTA CATERING COMPANY



Fabulous Food Service with Style

Caterers

Caterers provide food, drink and staff to setup, serve, and cleanup. They can cover the entire party or provide certain portions. Catering services include:

- Creating menu proposals and then incorporating your suggestions.
- Providing personnel for supervising 'at-the-party' staff and taking care of any problems, similar to a maitre d' in a restaurant.
- Calculating food and beverage quantities and equipment rentals.
- Moving furniture and setting up rental equipment, setting tables, preparing and serving the food and drinks.
- Cleaning up and returning your home or facility to its pre-party condition and packaging any leftovers for you.
- Coordinating the services of rental companies, staffing services, florists, and valet.

Catering a meal in your home or other special location can be as expensive as taking the same number of people to a good restaurant. However, a catered event enables you to create a unique and intimate experience that meets your party objectives. While the food and service may be more expensive than a restaurant, the liquor bill will typically be much less.

A full service caterer will give you a contract that lists the exact menu, specific responsibilities and costs. It may list exact quantities for expensive or unusual items. The contract will list the number and type of staff, special décor provided, rentals, liquor, and extras such as valets, costumes, entertainers, etc. If your kitchen or facility does not have adequate cooking equipment the caterer may include the cost to rent a stove or convection oven. It is common to add a service charge (or gratuity) from 15 to 20 percent of the total food bill. Some caterers will ask you to pay a preparation fee for the proposal, which would be credited toward your party when you decide to hire them. A deposit is required to secure the date and the balance is paid on the day of the party.

Some caterers may provide food for pickup or delivery only. In this case, they are not taking any other responsibility for your party.

Ideally, select a caterer whose food and service you have previously enjoyed or get referrals from friends. If you don't know the caterer, ask to see pictures, plans or menus from one or more previous parties similar to your planned event; talk to references provided; or schedule a tasting of the proposed menu (there may be a nominal charge for a tasting).

Caterer Checklist:

- Contract Completed
- Menu Selected
- Tasting (if necessary)
- Staff Attire Specified
- Arrival Time Agreed
- Guest Count Confirmed
- Liquor Ordered
- Rental Equipment Ordered
- Rental Equipment Delivery Confirmed
- Flowers Ordered
- Flowers Delivery Confirmed
- Décor Agreed Upon

6544 Superior Avenue Sarasota, FL 34231

Tel. 941.927.7675 Fax 941.927.7671

www.SarasotaCateringCompany.com



Rental Service

Rental Services can provide linen, dishes and flatware, serving dishes, stoves, warmers, tents, heaters, fans, chairs and tables. It might be necessary to use more than one rental service.

Rental companies are responsible for providing clean, working supplies and equipment at a specified date and time. When the rentals are delivered, immediately check the details of condition and quantities, ensuring that you received the right items with the right counts and in good working order. Waiting until just before the event to complete the check may prevent the rental company from providing a timely replacement if it is needed.

In order to find a good rental company:

- Look at the equipment on display in their showroom. Does it have the desired quality and finish?
- Talk to the staff to determine whether they are knowledgeable about their equipment and services.
- Determine whether they have a comprehensive selection of items. Do you need more than one company? Some may not carry linens, for example.
- Determine whether their charges are comparable to others in the area. In addition to the rental charge, they may charge for set up or delivery.

Caterers frequently have a preferred rental company. If the caterer has the responsibility to determine needed quantities of equipment, check things in and see that everything is packed for return. It is important that they work well together.

Rentals can be as expensive as the food. You should receive an itemized bill listing everything you have ordered and the prices. Look to see how late you can adjust the order, up or down, or cancel without charge. Remember, if something gets broken or lost, you can be charged the replacement cost of that item.

Rental companies will typically take orders a year in advance. The earlier you order your preferred items, the better your chance to guarantee their availability. Some items are popular or the rental company may maintain low quantities, making certain items unavailable in a busy season or on a weekend.

Rental Company Checklist:

- Review contract and double check all items included
- Validate delivery date, time and place
- Confirm pickup time
- Double check quantities/conditions of items upon delivery
- Double check quantities/conditions of items for return

Valet Service

You should consider hiring a valet service if parking is difficult, distant, inconvenient or if the neighborhood is unsafe. Valets are responsible for parking cars and returning them to your guests in the same condition as when they arrived. Only hire a service that provides insurance to cover their work. Ask to inspect and validate the valet's insurance certification before agreeing to hire them. The valet service should provide signs and uniforms to announce their presence to your guests.

SARASOTA CATERING COMPANY



Fabulous Food Service with Style

A professional valet service should schedule a site inspection to determine where they will receive the cars, where they will park them and how long it will take to park and retrieve them. They will also know if a permit is necessary for this event.

Valet charges are based upon how many attendants are required, how long they will work and how challenging it will be to park the cars. There is generally an additional charge when you request the valet's attendants to refuse tips from the guests.

Get a valet referral from a favorite restaurant or a friend. If you don't have first hand knowledge, interview at least two companies before selecting one.

Florists

Flowers add a colorful and interesting touch to any party. A florist can help you create a look that will support your chosen décor, from a simple arrangement on the dinner table to dramatic sweeps of color throughout your home.

A florist's charges are based on the quality, quantity, and type flowers they use as well as a premium for custom designs. When working with a florist, as with other contractors, it is important to set a budget.

If you are not familiar with florists in your area, visit two or more shops to view their work and perhaps give them an inexpensive commission to see if you can work with them and if you like their style.

If floral arrangements are out of your budget, consider buying cut flowers and arranging them yourself. On the dining table, flower arrangements should not interfere with the sight lines of each other.

Wedding Coordinators

Engaging someone experienced in handling weddings can save aggravation and possibly money. Wedding coordinators have reliable resources for locations, entertainment, florists, and gown makers, typically anyone that can help your wedding be a successful event.

Wedding coordinators are usually fee-based so it is important to determine upfront what you want them to do and the associated fees. There may be some aspects of the wedding that you want to handle yourself, so it is important to state the boundaries. Your fee arrangement should clearly stipulate what circumstances will generate additional costs. You should ask the wedding coordinator to inform you when you are requesting services that are not covered in your agreement. As with other contractors, obtain a written agreement containing the list of services to be provided.

You should be aware that it is common for event planners and wedding coordinators to request a referral fee from vendors that are recommended by them. This fee usually ends up being buried in the recommended vendor's bill. This vendor and coordinator arrangement is unethical unless this referral fee is revealed ahead of time. Be sure to ask and clearly understand any fee arrangements ahead of time.

6544 Superior Avenue Sarasota, FL 34231

Tel. 941.927.7675 Fax 941.927.7671

www.SarasotaCateringCompany.com



Other Service Providers

In no special order, here are other services that could help you:

- Entertainment Agencies
- Temporary Employment Services
- Balloon Stores
- Invitation Specialists
- Party Stores

How Can I Trim Budget?

Sometimes the party can get too expensive, so here are some possibilities for reducing the costs:

- Reduce the menu selections –fewer items result in less waste.
- Simplify the menu selections – use simple food rather than elaborate dishes. Be mindful of expensive ingredients as well as difficult or time- consuming preparation methods.
- Make some of the food yourself, but don't use a recipe that you have not previously prepared; add your hors d'oeuvres and desserts to the catered entrée.
- Replace a more expensive wine with a less expensive one. Use both mixed drinks and wine. Mixed drinks are often less expensive to serve than wine.
- Replace an open bar with a single thematic cocktail service such as margaritas or cosmopolitans.
- Reduce the size of the glassware and/or increase the amount of ice in each glass.
- Borrow china or serving pieces from friends rather than rent them. Use paper plates and plastic ware.
- Pickup and return the rented items to save on the delivery and setup expenses.
- Shorten the social time before dinner to reduce the number of drinks and hors d'oeuvres needed.
- Ask your friends to lend you a hand or some of their decorations so you don't have to buy them.
- Cut the guest list!

Enjoy your Party!

6544 Superior Avenue Sarasota, FL 34231

Tel. 941.927.7675 Fax 941.927.7671

www.SarasotaCateringCompany.com