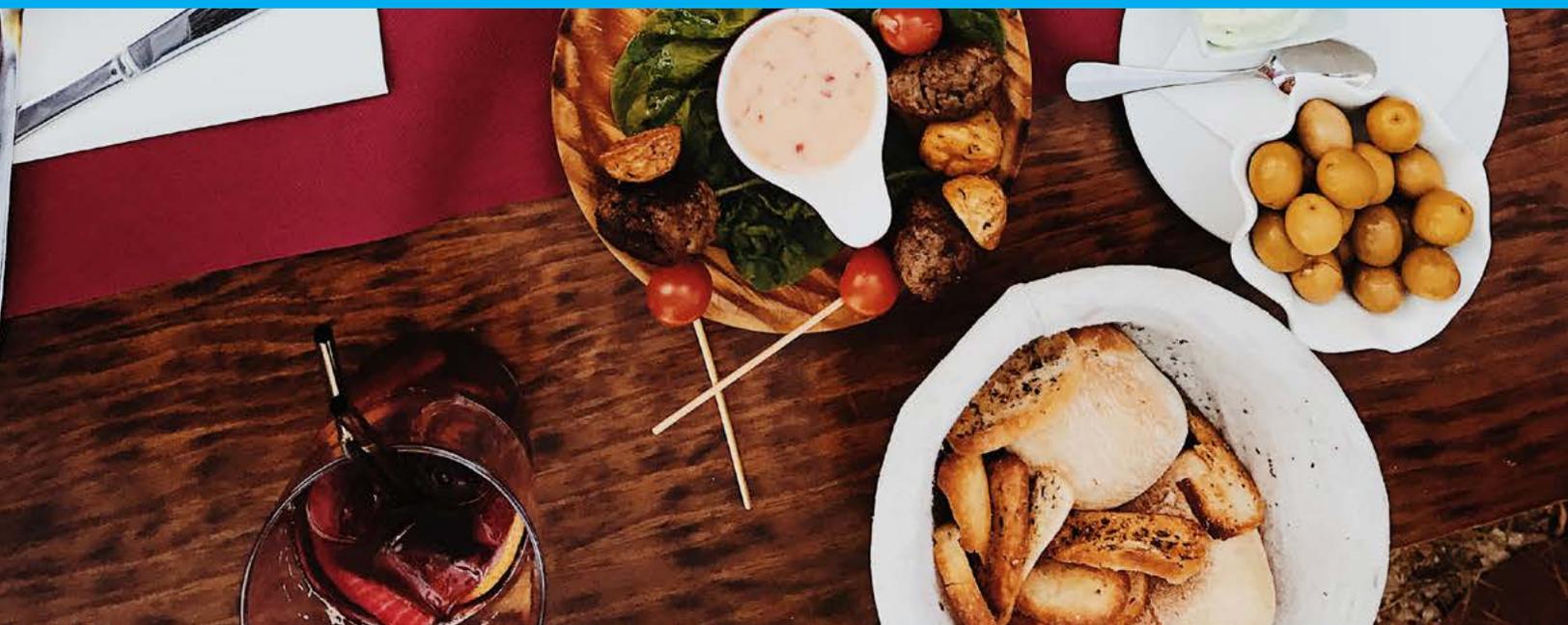




Gather

How to Host a Successful Sit-Down Dinner

A Checklist of Tips & Reminders



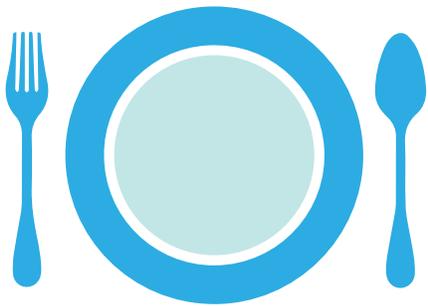
How to Host a Successful Sit-Down Dinner

Sit-down dinners are great offerings for your venue. They're the most formal and traditional dinner events that are the perfect option for everything from a wedding reception to a corporate outing. Plus, sit-down dinners are often [cost-efficient](#) for your client as well, and they can add more structure (and elegance) to an event.

With that in mind, we've crafted an exclusive checklist featuring helpful tips, reminders and explanations for how to host a sit-down dinner in style at your venue.

Know the capacity of your space

When following up on a booking inquiry for a sit-down soirée, it's wise to be very straightforward about how many guests can comfortably fit in your venue. Having any [outdoor space](#), such as a patio, can help accommodate more patrons, but keep in the mind that you'll need to have an inside area to move to if the weather doesn't cooperate.



Offer a variety of chair and table options

If your venue doesn't have a sizeable storage area, it's unlikely you'll be able to house a large amount of various table and chair styles. However, it's always a good idea to have at least two options for tables – ideally, long rectangular tables and large round ones. You also want seating that can accommodate various event styles, so consider having quality wooden folding chairs, along with fabric slipcovers that can instantly (and affordably) change up the look.

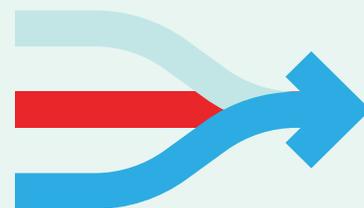
Decide on assigned or unassigned seating

There are merits to both assigned and unassigned seating for sit-down dinners. With assigned, there's no guesswork on the part of the guests, and they have the opportunity to [meet new people](#). On the other hand, unassigned seats are often easier on the event host, and there's no risk of placecard swapping or requests to be moved.



Allow for plenty of room between guests

You want to [maximize your space](#), but it's crucial to keep in mind that guests need to be able to freely move about the dining area. Whether they have to get up to use the restroom or visit another table, they need to be able to gesture and eat freely, without worrying about bumping elbows with their neighbor or knocking over a drink.



Map out a detailed floor plan

A detailed floor plan will be your event coordinator's best friend. Create one a few weeks before the event at the latest, so you and the client can finalize the table positions, number of chairs and any extra specifics that may affect the layout.

Get a final guest count

In the earlier phase of the planning process with your client, you can suggest a deadline for the final guest count to be submitted to you, like 24 hours prior to the event. This way, you can be sure you have the appropriate amount of food and drinks, and make any necessary floor plan updates.



Prepare your kitchen for day-of flexibility

A sit-down dinner can take a lot of the guesswork out of the meal part of the event, especially if the menu is prix fixe. However, the kitchen staff needs to [manage their expectations](#) and be prepared for change-ups, like a client who forgot to mention they have an allergy or a food restriction.

Up the elegance factor

There's a [built-in elegance](#) to a sit-down dinner. Your venue can play off of this with small but impactful touches like cloth napkins, linen tablecloths and offering complimentary decor like fresh floral arrangements or string lights. These cost-effective additions can do wonders when it comes to impressing your client.



Have enough staff to keep things running smoothly

A great event can quickly become a disaster if dishes are piling up, guests are growing thirsty or food is served cold. Be confident that you have enough [staff members](#) to keep things running smoothly. This means enough people to bring out food, refill drinks, deliver extra amenities to tables and clear plates when guests are finished.



The Checklist

- Know the capacity of your space
- Offer a variety of chair and table options
- Decide on assigned or unassigned seating
- Allow for plenty of room between guests
- Map out a detailed floor plan
- Get a final guest count
- Prepare your kitchen for day-of flexibility
- Up the elegance factor
- Have enough staff to keep things running smoothly

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