

CHAPTER-1

MEALS & MENU PLANNING

MENU

Introduction

Menu is the statement of food and beverage items available or provided by food establishments primarily based on consumer demand and designed to achieve organizational objectives. It represents the focal point around which components of food service systems are based. The menu is designed carefully what the outlet wants to cater for, keeping in mind the type of clientele. The main advantage of a well-planned menu is that it leads to consumer satisfaction. It also helps to motivate the employees for a responsible and successful service

A. Origin of Menu

Originally the "**bill of fare**", as it is termed in English, or menu in French, was not presented at the table. The banquet consisted of only two courses, each made up of a variety of dishes, anything from 10 to 40 in number. The first 10-40 dishes were placed on the table before the diners entered- hence the word entrée- and, when consumed were removed or relieved by 10-40 other dishes- hence the words relevés and removes came into existence.

B. Objectives of Menu Planning

The aim of menu planning is to:

1. Meet nutritional needs - "Recognition that food is treatment" - part of medical therapy
2. Plan meals within the food cost
3. Simplify purchase, preparation, and storage of meals
4. Provide attractive, appetizing meals with no monotony
5. Save time and money
6. Minimize overhead expenditure, i.e., fuel, electricity, water, labor.
7. Meet /exceed customer expectations
8. Determine production methods and distribution systems
9. Dictate staffing levels
10. Provide quality , standardization & predictability

Menu planning is the most important aspect of planning and organization in the food industry. It is an advance plan of a dietary pattern over a given period of time.

MENU PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Menu planning is one of the important managerial activities of food and beverages operations executed by a team comprising the entrepreneur/proprietor, the restaurant manager, and the executive chef. In a large hotel, the general manager and the food and beverage (F&B) manager will also be members of the team. In welfare catering operations, the head of the institution, the catering manager, and the finance manager will be involved. Menu planning calls for careful thought on many factors that would determine the success of the F&B operation. Menu forms the basis or acts as a guide upon which all other managerial and operational activities of F&B operations rest on.

POINTS OR FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED WHILE PLANNING THE MENU

Whether it is for new outlets or existing outlets, points related to the following aspects should be considered by the team while planning the menu:

1. Operations hour

The team must consider policy on operation hours of the business while planning menu. If it is operating throughout the day from morning 7 to night 11, then all dishes required during breakfast, mid morning, lunch, evening snacks, dinner, and so on, should be included. If it is going to be operational only during lunch and dinner, then the menu should be planned accordingly. During lunch hour operations, guests expect quick service or business/executive lunch, which should be taken into account.

2. What to serve

The policy of the management may not permit the inclusion of beef, pork or any of the non-vegetarian dishes, genetically modified food, and so on. Dishes included in menu should be the framework of the establishment's policy.

3. Production process

The type of production process the business is going to implement, such as traditional partie system centralized production, cook-chill, cook-freeze, and sous-vide, and so on, should be taken into account while planning the menu.

4. Use of convenience products

Convenience products of many categories, from ones requiring some amount of final preparation in the kitchen to ready-to-eat forms, are available in the market. The team must consider policy on usage of convenience products.

5. Style of service

Menu should be planned taking into account the style of service to be implemented. For example, buffet, silver, American, tray service, takeaway, and so on.

6. Type of menu

The type of menu to be implemented in operations should be borne in mind while planning the menu. The la carte menu will offer extensive choice under each category and table d'hôte menu will have a set number of courses with a limited choice at set price.

C. Types of Menu

The menu are basically of two types:-

- **À la carte**
- **Table d'hôte**

À la Carte menu

The term à la carte may be translated as 'from the card'. This type of menu may be defined by the following points:

- It gives a full list of all the dishes that may be prepared by the establishment
- Each dish is priced separately
- A certain waiting time has to be allowed for many of the dishes
- Some dishes are cooked to order

This type of menu may be offered on its own in a first-class establishment, or in conjunction with a form of table d'hôte or **carte du jour** menu in a smaller catering establishment. The dishes may be changed according to season- oysters, melon, asparagus, game- but each item will remain individually priced.

Table d'hôte

The definition of table d'hôte menu is covered by the following points:

- The menu has fixed number of courses
- There is a limited choice within each course
- The selling price of the menu is fixed
- The dishes provided will all be ready at a set time

This type of menu may be offered by itself or in conjunction with an à la carte or carte du jour menu. It is the more popular and simpler form of menu, being easier to control and operate and giving less wastage of food. The set price of the table d'hôte menu is charged whether or not the full menu is consumed.

D. Courses of French Classic Menu

The number of courses on a menu, and dishes within each course, depends on the size and class of the establishment. In an establishment where full food preparation and service brigades are in full operation a full menu may be offered. In this case the courses or sections of the menu may be divided as follows:

1. **Hors-d'œuvre**
2. **Potage (Soup)**
3. **Ouefs (Egg)**
4. **Farineux (Rice and Pasta)**
5. **Poisson (Fish)**
6. **Entrée**
7. **Sorbet**
8. **Relevé**
9. **Rôti (Roast)**
10. **Légumes (Vegetables)**
11. **Salades (Salads)**
12. **Buffet Froid (Cold Buffet)**
13. **Entremet (Sweet)**
14. **Savoureux (Savoury)**
15. **Fromage (Cheese)**
16. **Dessert (Fresh Fruit)**
17. **Beverages**

F. TYPES OF MEALS

Food and beverage service is about serving the customers when they are hungry. However F&B outlets offer a typical variety of food depending on customers demand, type of operation, location etc.

The most important meals of the day are:

- (i) **Early morning tea [EMT]:** Most often these orders are placed with the room service and it consists of a choice of tea and coffee served with cookies or biscuits. Service is expected to be fast and timing of this meal is from 4.am to 6.am in the morning.
- (ii) **Breakfast:** Breakfast, Elevenses, High tea and Supper are considered the subsidiary meals of the day. Whereas Lunch and Dinner are the two main meals. Although light (lite), the smaller meals fulfill nutritional requirements of and when required if properly planned, divide the day into even food breaks. Breakfast is considered as one of the most important meal nutritionally.
- (iii) **Brunch or elevenses:** The word 'brunch' comes from a combination of lunch and breakfast. It refers to a heavy meal eaten around 11 am by guests who wish to skip lunch or those who hate missed breakfast. Today brunch has become very popular in coffee shops and multi-cuisine restaurants, especially marketed extensively on these days.
- (iv) **Lunch and Dinner:** These are main meals of the day. All F&B outlets cater to these meals. The variety of service differs from buffet and pre-plated in coffee shops, silver service in multi-cuisine restaurants.