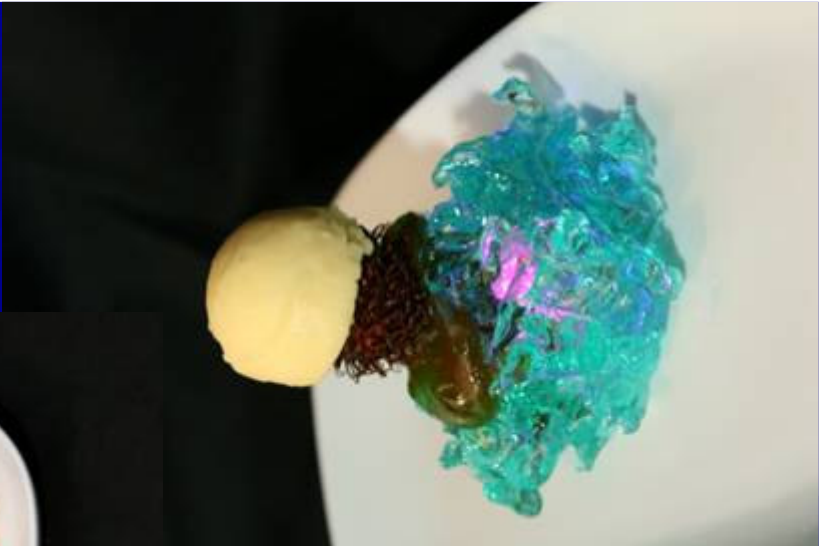


Maximizing your \$\$\$ with Hotel and F & B Contracts

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20 Ways to Save \$\$\$ on Food and Beverage

- **KNOW YOUR GROUP'S HISTORY.** Closely analyze how many people attend your food functions and how much they eat and drink; that way you won't pay for meals and drinks that aren't being consumed.
- **CONTROL WHAT IS SERVED.** Open one bottle of red and white per table and fill glasses only on request. If a table requests more wine, have servers check with the planner before opening another bottle. There may be half-empty bottles at other tables.

- **SKIP THE TOP SHELF.** Use house-brand cocktails and wine instead of premium brands.
- **NEGOTIATE BARTENDER FEES.** If you agree to a beverage minimum, negotiate to eliminate the bartender fees if you meet the minimum.
- **USE STAND-UP TABLES FOR COCKTAIL RECEPTIONS.** That way, people are more likely to network and less likely to hang around and drink and eat all night.

- **LINES ARE OK, TO A POINT.** At cocktail receptions, don't be afraid of having medium-size lines at the bar. Long lines are a no-no, but lines that are five or six deep encourage networking and discourage over-indulging on cocktails.
- **ASK THE CHEF.** Meet with the chef or catering personnel to see if you can use the same menu as another group that is meeting at your facility at the same time. Having the chef prepare more of the same food in advance can result in cost savings. Also, check with the chef for seasonal or regional specialties, which might be less expensive.

- **LOCK IN MENU PRICES.** If the hotel will not provide a specific menu in advance, at least agree that menu prices will not increase more than a fixed percentage per year.
- **ORDER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE “BY CONSUMPTION.”** Uneaten food and drink can be returned and not charged. This works well with soda and packaged foods, such as potato chips, but also can be done with perishables.
- **USE SIT-DOWN MEALS.** This can cut food preparation labor costs as much as 20 percent.



- **SKIP THE DESSERT, SALAD, OR SOUP.**
Attendees won't miss the courses, and dessert can be served at breaks.
- **Place Expensive Food Items in Harder-to-reach Places On the Banquet Table.**
- **TRY STAFFED FOOD STATIONS SUCH AS STIR-FRY STATIONS AND PASTA TABLES.**

- **AVOID SHRIMP, OYSTERS, AND OTHER DELICACIES.**
- **FIND A SPONSOR.** A local winery or microbrewery might pick up your liquor costs.
- **USE A CONTROLLED-POUR SYSTEM.** Make sure that bartenders measure what they pour. If you are being charged per drink, you may find a “liberal ice” policy and weaker drinks. If you are being charged by the bottle, the mixed drinks might be too strong.

- **ASK THE HOTELIER FOR A DISCONTINUED WINE LABEL.** These often cost less.
- **RE-USE OPENED BOTTLES OF LIQUOR AND WINE.** One logical place would be your hospitality or VIP suite.
- **USE SMALLER PLATES.**
- **RE-USE CENTERPIECES.** Or ask attendees to bring something related to the meeting's theme that can be used in centerpieces. The items later can be donated to a charity.

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“Has anyone noticed how F&B prices are just skyrocketing? I am working with a 4 star hotel, and I am looking at their F&B prices, and I can't believe them. A regular American breakfast is quoted at \$45 per person++ = almost \$60 per person. So if one of my guests just sits down for coffee and a pastry, or a box of cereal, that will cost me \$60. I have menus from a different hotel (a 5 star hotel) and the same menu is only \$38 (still high in my opinion).

At this same hotel they offer a cookie break for \$16! It's just cookies and pitchers of milk - no soft drinks, no bottled water, just cookies and milk! And, on the same set of menus, they show cookies at \$42/dozen = \$3.50 per cookie. So does that mean that there will be enough cookies on the \$16 break for each guest to have 4 cookies plus a glass of milk?

Now, I am speaking a bit tongue in cheek because of course that \$16 also covers labor, etc., but c'mon! With the tax and gratuity the "cookie break" comes out to over \$20 per person! How many boxes of cookies could \$20 per person buy?

I should just give everyone \$5 and send them to the hotel gift shop and have them each buy a package of Oreos there.

I'm sorry. My sarcastic side is showing. :-)

Btw, I've sent an email to my sales rep about this. When I signed the contract, 2008 menus were not available. But it seems as though pricing has significantly increased over 2007 rates.”

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Ways to Save \$\$\$ on Hotel Contracts

- Attrition
- Service Ratio
- Waiter Briefing
- Waiter Rehearsals
- Buffets/Action Stations/Plated Meals

Synchronized Service





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