

Methods of Service

Introduction

There are several forms of service styles that are being followed in different food service establishments. The service may range from simple cafeteria service (followed in industrial and institutional canteens) to elaborate form of Guéridon service (followed in fine dining restaurants). Different types of service followed in food service operations are;

English Service

French service is a formal type of service which originated in European nobility and is presently enjoyed by a few who can afford the time and expense. This type of service is featured in many of the best international restaurants and hotels. It is an expensive, leisurely and personalized service. It is also called silver service.

Features:

- ❖ The food is prepared and attractively arranged on the service platters by food production staff in the kitchen.
- ❖ Waiter brings food to the dining room.
- ❖ Waiter places the plates before each guest from his right hand side moving clockwise.
- ❖ Waiter holds the food platter on left hand and transfers the food to the guest plate by artfully manipulating the service spoon and fork with right hand. The waiter moves anti-clockwise while serving the food.
- ❖ Food is served from left hand side.
- ❖ Beverages are served from right hand side.
- ❖ Clearance is done from right hand side.

French Service

It is known as Host service, as the host plays an important role in the service. This service is very popular in formal dinners and is relatively easy to implement for service staff. It is also called family service. This service is mostly found in family pensions and banquets, where the food is presented to each guest from left hand side to help themselves.

Finished food is brought in by the steward on platters and presented to host for approval. The host himself determines the portion size and serves his guests using one of these methods.

- ❖ Host serves the portions to his guests directly on to their plates.
- ❖ Host asks the steward to serve the pre-determined portions to the guests.
- ❖ Host passes the portioned food around the table and the guests serve themselves.

American Service

It is the most common style of table service found in United States. This is very simple and informal kind of service. It is also known as pre-plated service. Being a quick form of service, it is chiefly used in coffee shops and restaurants with a busy luncheon trade.

Features:

- ❖ The food is portioned and pre-plated in the kitchen by the chef.
- ❖ The pre-plated food is brought into the restaurant by the waiter and is served to the guest.
- ❖ Food is served to guest from right hand side.
- ❖ Beverages are served from right hand side.
- ❖ Clearance is done from right hand side.
- ❖ Service is done in clockwise direction.

Russian Service

This type of service comes from era of Tsars of Russia who believed in pomp and ceremony. The basic element in this service derives from the style of having large joints, whole fishes, and birds, often decoratively placed on dishes with elaborate garnishes, on the sideboard visible to the guests. This service is not practiced much in recent times.

Features:

- ❖ Large joints with elaborate garnishes are neatly arranged on platters in the kitchen.
- ❖ Food is brought into the restaurant and is presented to the host for his approval.
- ❖ Food is carved and portioned in full view of the guest on side board.
- ❖ Food is served to the guest from the left hand side using service spoon and fork.

Guéridon Service

It is an elaborate and elegant service style in which menu items are partly prepared in the kitchen and the rest is finished on a specially designed cart beside guest tables in restaurant. It is known as cart or trolley service. Menu items are cooked or flambéed or carved in front of the guests by specially trained staff. This requires professionally trained service staff that understands and follows all of the procedures required for effective tableside food preparation.

Guéridon service staff may include;

- Maitre d'hotel – who knows the intricacies of cart service and supervises the dining area.
- Chef de rang – generally responsible for taking orders, preparing food at the table and collecting guest payments.
- Commis de rang – responsible for taking food orders to the kitchen, placing the orders, picking up food in the kitchen and bringing it to the restaurant table carts. He also delivers food to guests.

Procedure:

- The steward keeps all the cooking equipment ready in the restaurant, comprising Guéridon trolleys, copper pans, and silver chafing dishes.
- Usually prepared food is brought into the restaurant by the steward and finished in front of the guest with a flourish.
- The prepared food is directly served onto the plate, and complete with accompaniments. Service is from right hand side of the guest.

Buffet Service

Buffet service displays food items in the appropriate containers and arranges them attractively on counters or tables in a proper order for the guests to help themselves. The Buffets can range from a simple offering of several hot and cold food items to elaborate presentations like ice or tallow (fat) sculptures, fresh flowers, edible vegetable or fruit centre pieces. Decorative service platters or bowls also can enhance the food presentation. Buffet can be broken into many sections such as salads, soups, vegetarian, non-vegetarian and desserts etc. to avoid the congestion at the counters.

Features

- ❖ Food is arranged in chafing dishes and placed on buffet counters.
- ❖ Crockery and cutlery are placed at the head of the buffet table.
- ❖ Guest moves along the buffet table and selects the dishes as per his choice.
- ❖ Guests help themselves in service.
- ❖ Waiters consistently keep buffet containers full, and quickly attend to food spills on and around the buffet line.

Counter Service

In this kind of service, the guest sits on a high stool across the counter, and a full cover is placed in front of him, consisting of a place mat, cutlery and glass. The food is displayed just behind the counter for the guest to choose his food. The steward takes the order and serves him directly from the steward's side of the counter.

In the other type, guest selects the items they want to have from the menu displayed, buy tokens and collects their food from counters on submission of tokens. Generally fast food centres, canteens and food courts follow this kind of service.

Cafeteria Service

This kind of service is generally followed in industrial and institutional cafeterias. Food is attractively arranged in proper sequence on counters. The guest starts at one end of the counter holding a plate in his hand. He moves along the counter picking his choice of dishes.

The cashier who sits at the end of the counter makes a bill for the items that are collected by the guest. In few operations, the meals are pre-paid.

Features:

- ❖ Guest stands in line
- ❖ Picks up the tray
- ❖ Moves along the counter picking his choice of dishes
- ❖ Cashier sits at the end of the counter and makes bill for the items collected
- ❖ Guest pays the bill

Room Service

It implies service of food and beverages in guest rooms. Smaller orders like snacks, tea and coffee are served in trays. Major orders such as lunch and dinner are taken to the room on trolleys. The room service may be of centralized or decentralized.

Features:

- ❖ The guest places his order with RSOT.
- ❖ Order taker writes the order on KOT and hands it over to captain
- ❖ The captain assigns the duty of service to the waiter.
- ❖ Waiter places the order in the kitchen and sets the tray or trolley
- ❖ Waiter picks up the order from kitchen
- ❖ Waiter places food on tray along with accompaniments
- ❖ Captain inspects the tray
- ❖ Waiter takes the order to room and delivers the order
- ❖ Waiter takes signature on guest check
- ❖ Waiter does the clearance of tray from the guest room