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Menu and Presentation

Menus represent an establishment – their design and content must reflect its philosophy and quality, and guests judge the restaurant by it. Well-designed and attractive menus are valuable promotional tools, support the employee's sales efforts and are responsible for revenue growth. Just selling from a price list would not be suitable.

The decisive factor is not how extensive a menu is, but rather the appropriate content, design and presentation. It must also be accurate: food and beverages must reflect the quality offered, and not make promises the kitchen cannot keep. Overall, a menu must be clean and made of a good-quality, long-lasting material. Its message must be original, easy to read and understand, with informative and tempting content.

Even the most beautiful menu is of little value if employees are not familiar with it. Would a waiter be credible if he doesn't know a menu's content or cannot explain the preparation of a given dish? Service employees must thoroughly know the menu to be able to describe the dishes and their preparation, and suggest beverages to complement them.

12. SKUPINA

À la carte menu and fixed menu

The à la carte menu lists dishes that are already prepared or ready to be prepared when ordered. When using the à la carte menu, a guest composes the menu himself, maybe with a service employee's suggestions, whereas the fixed menu lists a selection of pre-determined dishes and often includes wine or beverage recommendations.

The structure of a menu

A menu that only lists all the dishes offered is informative but doesn't promote sales.

The menu must be organized and composed according to certain basic rules. The following list corresponds to a modified classic menu selection:

- ☛ Cold appetizers.
- ☛ Soups.
- ☛ Warm appetizers.
- ☛ Fish.
- ☛ Seafood.
- ☛ Daily dishes, subdivided into beef, veal, pork, lamb, poultry, game meat and wildfowl.
- ☛ Freshly prepared dishes (grilled, pan-fried or sautéed), grouped into beef, veal, pork, lamb, poultry, game meat and wildfowl.
- ☛ Side dishes, if not already included in the dishes.
- ☛ Vegetables.
- ☛ Salads.
- ☛ Desserts, grouped into warm or cold desserts, ice cream and ice cream specialties, fresh fruit and compôtes, and cheese.

Menu design guidelines

- ☛ Use clear and truthful language (according to legal regulations).
- ☛ The language used can have regional, national or international flair depending on the kind of establishment.
- ☛ Don't make promises that the kitchen cannot fulfill.
- ☛ Don't just list the dishes but describe them in an appetizing way: juicy filet steak, flaky pastry shell, strudel fresh out of the oven, etc.
- ☛ Highlight promotional information: homemade, wines from your own vineyard, fresh vegetables from your organic garden, etc.
- ☛ Having the menus in many languages is helpful to assist foreign guests. If not available, service employees should be able to translate the dishes into different languages.

Considerations for the visual design of a menu

- ☛ The design and presentation should reflect the quality and style of your restaurant.
- ☛ The font or the printing must be easy to read. It is recommended not to use more than three font styles and sizes.
- ☛ Overall presentation should be kept light: illustrations can promote sales but should not be overpowering, making the menu difficult to read.
- ☛ Coat of arms and a history of your establishment may interest your guests.
- ☛ Emphasize house specialties. Permanent offers for special groups of people (children, vegetarians, seniors) should be listed on sepa-

rate menus or grouped if part of the principal menu.

- ☛ If you use various menus, make sure that their overall design and presentation is consistent.
- ☛ Menus should be easy to maintain and made of a good-quality, long-lasting material. Discard damaged menus.

Other information to include in the menu

- ☛ Prices, tax and service charge information must be clear and easy to read.
- ☛ Cover charge information.
- ☛ Preparation times, especially for certain à la carte dishes that take longer to prepare.
- ☛ Calorie information. This makes it easier for calorie-conscious guests to make their selection.
- ☛ Weight of main ingredients. For meats and fish, it gives an idea about the size of the portion.
- ☛ Offer information about other services and special promotions (catering, bar, dessert room, other restaurants in the house).

To conclude, it has to be mentioned that a menu should not be too extensive:

- ☛ It must be easily taken in at a glance.
- ☛ It should not make choosing a menu unnecessarily difficult.
- ☛ A smaller menu allows kitchen personnel to pay more attention to the preparation of the dishes, which can directly increase quality.
- ☛ A smaller menu is economical because it requires less inventory, storage space and mise en place, and results in a faster turnover, ensuring freshness.

Soup

*

Warm appetizer

*

Main course

Vegetables

Starch

*

Dessert

*

Coffee

*

*Appropriate red or
white wine*

Place and date

A simple menu

Menu design for banquets and special events

Special menus are designed for banquets, weddings and special events. They are part of a sophisticated ambience and are highly appreciated by guests, often taken home as souvenirs of a nice evening. They are important promotional pieces and particular attention should be given to their quality and design.

Menus vary in design, depending on the occasion and the kind of establishment.

A simple menu, commonly used in small and medium-size restaurants, consists of a page with the inscription "Menu" on top, and lists the dishes in their order of service. Often, the beverage selection is included at the bottom of the page. The place, the date and the event complete the list.

A folded menu with an insert is used for special occasions. On the cover page, the host and the occasion are mentioned (wedding, dinner dance, etc.). The menu is listed on the right side of the insert and the beverages on the left side. The place, the date and the event are also mentioned.

Menu style

- ✱ The classic form: the menu items are listed in their order on the right side, centered, and each item is clearly separated from the other by symbols, lines or spaces. The beverages are listed on the left side, also centered.
- ✱ The modern form: the food items are listed on the right side, aligned left; the beverages are listed at the left side, also aligned left. They can be separated by symbols.

Sparkling wine

2004 SAUVIGNON BLANC

Weingut Pfaffl

2004 Riesling

Weingut F. X. Pichler

2002 CABERNET-MERLOT

MALTESER Schlossweingut

2000 CHÂTEAU PICHON-LONGUEVILLE,

PAUILLAC

2003 TRAMINER AUSLESE

Weingut Feiler-Artinger

MENU

PRAWNS WITH SPRING SALAD

FILET OF PERCH WITH BEAN SPROUTS

THYME-CRUSTED SADDLE OF LAMB WITH GREEN BEANS AND POTATO GRATIN

A SELECTION FROM THE CHEESE BOARD

ALMOND SOUFFLÉ ON TRAMINER SABAYON

Coffee

Linz, August 3, ...

Folded menu written in modern form

Menu types

Menus that only contain food items:

À la carte menu, standard menu

This is the main menu, designed for long-time use, regardless of seasonal changes. Emphasis is on quality, not quantity.

Lunch and dinner menus are small standard à la carte menus, designed to accommodate guests during the main meal hours, followed by a late dinner menu in the evening hours. A small light fare or snack menu

is available at other times, offering simple cold or warm dishes that can be prepared by the service employee.

Special and specialty menus

These are menus for a specific group of people or event, and are often part or an addition to the standard menu.

The daily specials menu consists of items changing daily, offered in addition to the standard menu.

The business lunch menu is for guests who don't have a lot of time for lunch (business people, seminar attendees, etc.). The dishes have to be

prepared quickly and should be light and easily digested.

More and more, the business lunch is offered as a buffet with a selection of cold and warm dishes.

To cater to health-conscious guests or sports enthusiasts, a small health menu, a vegetarian menu or a menu for the athlete can be designed to promote sales.

Special dietetic or weight reduction menus are offered in spas, spa hotels and similar establishments.

Vegetarian restaurants offer vegetarian and raw-food menus. There are three kinds of vegetarian diets: vegetarian: no meat, fish or poultry; ovo-lacto vegetarian: no eggs and dairy products, or lacto-vegetarian: no eggs but dairy products allowed; and vegan: abstain from eating and using any animal products, including milk, cheese and other dairy items, eggs, wool, silk and leather.

These differences must be identified and reflected in a vegetarian menu.

Menus for seniors contain meals appropriate for the older generation. The portions are smaller as customary, which also reduces the price.

The dessert menu consists of cold and warm desserts, ice cream, fresh fruit and compôtes as well as cheese. It is inserted in the standard menu and can be changed every day.

Individual desserts are often presented in their own menu in the form of a cheese menu or an ice cream specialties menu. Ice cream producers usually offer nicely printed menus, where one only needs to insert the price.

Last but not least, seasonal menus are used to promote special dishes, such as strawberries and asparagus in spring and game and wildfowl in fall, and also for special occasions like Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Menu categories

The categories are the daily menu, lunch and dinner menu, late dinner menu, tasting menu, children's menu and menu for special events and holidays, etc.

The menu of the day is used in high-volume casual restaurants and consists of one or more menus offered the whole day or a lunch and dinner menu offered during specific hours.

The lunch menu usually consists of three to four courses, dishes that are also included in the daily à la carte menu. The dinner menu is usually more extensive. Since guests have more time in the evening, it may also include freshly prepared dishes.

After 10.00 p.m., lighter dishes are offered in the late dinner menus.

A choice menu is offered as a daily menu or to groups or for special events: guests can choose their own combination of courses for a set price.

Combined menus

Include both foods and beverages.

Menu for menu tasting: This is a combined menu. A specific beverage is offered with every dish. **Special event menu:** This is always a combined menu. The menu doesn't list prices, because the host is paying.

Buffet menu

Buffet menus, for a buffet open to the public, are available for breakfast, lunch, dinner, late dinner and special events. Must include the price and mention that it is all-inclusive. There are, however, special buffets (salad, dessert, etc.) where the dishes are individually priced. Buffet menu, for a closed buffet that is only for invited guests: The menu lists foods and beverages ordered by the host, without price.

Breakfast menu

This usually combines all breakfast offers, listed separately and priced individually: English breakfast, breakfast buffet, à la carte breakfast dishes and beverages.

Brunch menu

Most often a brunch is offered in buffet form. The menu lists the price per person (see open buffet). However, the brunch menu can also consist of à la carte dishes where all the items are individually priced, including the beverages.

Coffee break or afternoon tea menu

These are always combined menus. The items are individually priced, but occasionally all-inclusive menus are also offered.

Room service menu

This menu contains all the foods and beverages available to be served to the rooms, either during certain hours or around the clock. The items are individually priced and a fixed room service charge or a percentage of the bill is added.

Children's menu

This consists of selected dishes and beverages that appeal to children. The items have imaginative names, the menus are colorful and funny, and come in various shapes (baseball hats, masks, aprons, etc.) that children can take home.

Beverage menus

Beverage list

Like all menus, the content and design of the beverage menu is determined by the character of an establishment. It should promote and reflect the image a business strives for, and contain a varied assortment of beverages, logically grouped. It can be illustrated with graphics, wine labels, and creative text.

Many restaurants have a single beverage menu containing all beverages, with everything from the apéritifs to digestifs, non-alcoholic beverages, coffee and tea.

A good beverage menu should be well-structured, with its items grouped by category, and include prices and serving amounts.

Structure of a beverage list

- **Apéritifs:** dessert wines (sherry, port wine), vermouth, bitters, anise-based liquors, dry cocktails.
- **Wines.**
- **Beer:** draft beer before bottled beer, domestic beer before foreign beer.
- **Non-alcoholic beverages.**
- **Hot beverages:** coffee, tea, chocolate and mixed milk drinks.
- **Digestifs:** brandies, liqueurs.

The wine list/menu

The wine list shows the quality of wines the establishment has to offer. Good wines are essential components of an outstanding meal.

Like any other menu, a wine list must be easy to read at a glance and clearly arranged.

Opinions about how extensive a wine list should be differ. Consider who your guests are and their expectations.

Obviously, the selection of wines must harmonize with the menu. Emphasis should be placed on domestic wines and the sommelier's selection. Rare wines make a beverage list interesting but should not be an essential part of it. They are certainly not an important part of revenue and should be grouped in a paragraph or page.

Some establishments have a wine list for rare wines only and a reference should be made of it in the regular wine list. The rare wine list is only presented on request.

It is the quality and not the quantity that makes up a good wine list.

Organization and structure of a wine list

- ❑ Open wines come before wines in the bottle.
- ❑ Domestic wines before foreign wines.
- ❑ White wines before rosé and red wines.
- ❑ Quality wines before special mature wines and vintage wines.
- ❑ Still wines before sparkling wines.

This sequence is considered as a guideline only. There are many different ways to design wine lists; however, they should always have a structure.

For instance, it is possible to group the wines by vineyard or producer.

Information that should be included in the wine list

- ❑ A numbering system.
- ❑ Description of the wine.
- ❑ Grape variety.
- ❑ Year.
- ❑ Producer.
- ❑ Amount.
- ❑ Price.
- ❑ Tax.
- ❑ Service charge, if applicable.

Sample structure of a wine list

Open wines

Domestic white wines

Domestic rosé wines

Domestic red wines

Grouped by wine-growing regions (or vineyards within the region)

Foreign white wines

Foreign rosé wines

Foreign red wines

Grouped by country of origin

Wines by the bottle

White wine by the bottle

Rosé wine by the bottle

Red wine by the bottle

Grouped by wine-growing regions (or vineyards within the region)

Domestic rare wines

Foreign white wines

Foreign rosé wines

Foreign red wines

Grouped by country of origin. Usually French wines are listed before wines from other countries.

Domestic sparkling wines

Champagne and other foreign sparkling wines

In addition, there are legally protected names, such as Grand-Cru (locations) or méthode champenoise (method of preparation) that must be mentioned on the wine list.

Specialty wines, such as Beaujolais Primeur or Beaujolais Nouveau, or the house wines of the month should also be listed.

Beer specialty menu

Organization and structure of a beer menu

- Non-alcoholic beers before beers low in alcohol.
- Domestic before foreign beers.
- Draft beers before bottle beers.
- Specialty beers last.

Information that must be included in a beer menu

- Description.
- Country of origin.
- Alcohol content.
- Size.
- Price.
- Tax.
- Service charge.
- Or all-inclusive price.

Specialty beers should be described in the list. Besides the permanent beer selection, special beers can be offered (for instance, as beer of the week) as well as specialty beers (Lambic).

Bar menu

The content of a bar menu is determined by the size of the bar and by its clientele.

A bar with a cosmopolitan clientele has different requirements than a bar catering to a local clientele. A modern bar menu features cocktails and mixed drinks and a selection of non-alcoholic and other beverages.

The structure of a bar menu

- Apéritifs.
- Sherry.
- Port wines.
- Before-dinner cocktails.
- Champagne or sparkling wine cocktails.
- Standard cocktails.
- Pick-me-ups.
- Fancy drinks.
- After-dinner cocktails.
- Non-alcoholic drinks.
- Whiskys/whiskeys (Highlands Malt Scotch whisky, blended Scotch whisky, Irish whiskey, Canadian whiskey, bourbon whiskey).
- Cognacs.
- Brandies.
- Armagnac.
- Trester brandies.
- Vodka.
- Gin.
- Rum (white rum, dark rum).
- Tequila.
- Fruit distillates.
- Liqueurs.
- White and red wines.
- Champagne and sparkling wines.
- Beers.
- Non-alcoholic beers.
- Non-alcoholic beverages.

Information that must be included in a bar menu

- Description of the item.
- Serving amount.
- Price.
- Tax.
- Service charge.

Cocktail menu

Cocktails are mostly alcoholic drinks made by combining spirit, brandy, liqueur, dessert wine with fruit or fruit juice, and bitters. In addition, non-alcoholic (virgin) cocktails are gaining in popularity. They are mostly short drinks (except champagne and sparkling wine cocktails).

Structure of a cocktail menu

- Before-dinner cocktails
- Champagne and sparkling wine cocktails
- Classic cocktails
- Pick-me-ups
- Fancy drinks
- After-dinner cocktails
- Non-alcoholic drinks

Apéritif menu

Apéritifs are appetite-stimulating drinks consumed before a meal, and they can be alcoholic or non-alcoholic, dry, fruity or bitter. They include fortified wines, such as sherry, port wines and vermouth; anise-based liquors (Pernod, Ouzo); bitters (Fernet-Branca, Underberg, Campari, Unicum); before-dinner cocktails; and more and more frequently non-alcoholic apéritifs (fruit juices).

Information that must be included in an apéritif menu

- Item description.
- Serving amount.

- Fruit and vegetable juice 0,125 l
- Open beer 0,2 l
- Open wine 1/8 l
- Open sparkling wine 0,1 l
- Fortified wine 5 cl
- Anise-flavored and other apéritifs 4 cl
- Kir 1/8 l
- Champagne or sparkling wine cocktails 0,1 l
- Before-dinner cocktail 6 cl (international 5 cl)
- Price.
- Tax.
- Service charge.

It should include a short description of the cocktails and apéritifs and promotions should be emphasized.

Structure of an apéritif menu

Non-alcoholic drinks first: fruit juice, vegetable juice

Beers

Dry, fruity white and rosé wines

Dry champagne or sparkling wine

Fortified wines

Anise-based drinks (Pastis)

Classic apéritifs

Classic apéritif drinks (Kir)

Before-dinner cocktails

Digestif menu

A digestif is a beverage consumed after the meal that aids digestion. Spirits and liqueurs as well as coffee specialties with various alcoholic ingredients are preferred.

Information that must be included in a digestif menu

- Item description.
- Serving amount:
- Fortified wine 5 cl
- Distillates and liqueurs 2 cl
- Whisky/whiskey 4 cl
- Other spirits 2,5 cl

- After-dinner cocktails 6 cl (international 5 cl)
- Coffee with alcohol (espresso with 2 cl spirit or large espresso with 4 cl)
- Price.
- Tax.
- Service charge.

Structure of a digestif menu

Dessert wines

Spirits and distillates, grouped by ingredients

Liqueurs

After-dinner cocktails

Coffee with alcohol

Tea menu

Tent cards and menu inserts are useful to make guests aware of tea specialties. In addition, including anecdotes, short stories, descriptions and the philosophy of tea can make it interesting.

Information that must be included in a tea menu

- Description.
- Serving amount (1 cup or glass, 1 portion – at least 2 cups).
- Price.
- Tax.
- Service charge.

Organization and structure of a tea menu

Loose leaf teas

- Fermented tea (black tea).
- Partially fermented tea (oolong tea).
- Unfermented tea (green tea).

Teas are categorized by their country of origin (China, India), by the region where they are grown (Assam, Darjeeling) and other qualities (GFOP – Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe).

Broken teas and fannings

- Fermented broken teas.
- Fermented fannings.

These are also characterized by country of origin, by growing region and other quality descriptions (FBOP – Flowery Broken Orange Pekoe; BOPF – Broken Orange Pekoe Fannings).

Blended teas

English breakfast tea, etc.

Aromatic teas:

Flavored teas, such as Earl Grey, apple tea, sweet orange tea, mango tea, wild cherry tea, etc.

Fruit and herbal teas

Such as fennel tea, camomile tea, rose-hip tea, linden tea, etc.

Tea drinks

- Hot tea drinks (grog, tea punch, etc.)
- Cold tea drinks (iced tea, punch)

Coffee menu

Information that must be included in a coffee menu

- ☒ Description, perhaps the name of the roasting company.
- ☒ Price.
- ☒ Tax.
- ☒ Service charge.

Organization and structure of a coffee specialties menu

Non-alcoholic hot coffee drinks
(espresso or large espresso, with or without milk, etc.).

Hot coffee drinks with alcohol
(Irish coffee, etc.).

Non-alcoholic iced coffee drinks
(Viennese iced coffee, Berlin iced coffee, American iced coffee).

Iced coffee drinks with alcohol
(iced coffee Delicious, iced coffee with Kahlúa).

