

- **Strong, clean lines.** Whether you use straight rows, angles, or curves, strong uninterrupted lines can be effective design elements. For example, you can create rows of vegetables rather than just placing them randomly or in a jumble. You can arrange sliced foods to form long overlapping lines.

Buffet Table Design The arrangement of items on a buffet table is just as important as the arrangement of food on your platters. Here are some tips for buffet table design:

- Guests should be able to reach food easily.
- Serving utensils and table utensils should be plentiful and within easy reach.
- Table design and layout must allow for any equipment necessary to keep foods cold as necessary.
- Larger or higher items should be placed behind smaller or lower items on the table surface.



FIGURE 10-23

Presentation Design

Multiple platters were used in this buffet.

INTERPRETING ILLUSTRATIONS Do you see any design elements that have not been addressed in this buffet presentation?

Source: Fuse/Getty Images



FIGURE 10-24

Grosse Pièce

A large portion of this ham has not been cut.

PREDICTING Do you see any design elements that have not been addressed in this presentation?

Source: David Smith/Fotolia

FOCUS ON Sanitation

Cross-Contamination

Use gloves, tongs, and other tools when you're setting up or serving a buffet to prevent contaminating food as you work.

Serving Main Items There are typically two ways to serve the main item in a cold food presentation or a buffet:

- **Slicing and sequencing.** Slice foods with irregular or tapered shapes to create definite lines when the slices are arranged in a sequence. Arranging slices to overlap one another in the order they were cut is referred to as **sequencing**. When a tapered turkey breast is sliced and sequenced, for example, a regular design with clean lines results.
- **Grosse pièce.** Serving the main item **grosse pièce** (GROHSS pee-YES) means that a large part of the main item is left unsliced. *Grosse pièce* means “large piece” in French. A main item can be presented *grosse pièce*, but the slices cut from the main item can be sequenced.

Serving Tools Serving tools are important for cold food presentations. Although these are functional items, they are set on the table and therefore become part of the presentation. For this reason, you should use dining room tools for a cold food presentation rather than kitchen tools, which may be too large for serving and are certainly not designed for food presentation. Dining room serving tools include ladles, tongs, serving spoons, serving forks, serving spatulas, and serving scoops.



READING CHECKPOINT

What are the two ways that main items are typically served in a cold food presentation or a buffet?

Centerpieces and Garnishes

Two other considerations remain for cold food presentations and for buffets. These are centerpieces and garnishes. They help bring the presentation or buffet together.

Centerpieces A beautiful centerpiece can be a great attraction, communicating excitement and reflecting the artistry in the food presented on the table. Centerpieces reinforce or magnify the buffet's theme or concept. They help the guests understand the function or meaning of any presentation.

Tall or very large centerpieces must be carefully located. They should never block a guest's view of or access to the food. Stabilize top-heavy centerpieces so they don't wobble or fall over. Be certain that all elements of

the display are safe when used with food. For example, toxic flowers (such as lilies of the valley) should not be used in a centerpiece where they could drop onto food and someone could accidentally eat them.

One of the most spectacular, but expensive, centerpieces is an ice sculpture. Ice carvings can be purely decorative or they can function as receptacles for food such as cooked shrimp or seafood salads. Individual ice sculptures in the form of decorative cups can hold frozen dishes, fruits, or vegetables.

Ice carving is a highly specialized skill, with the additional challenge that ice melts. However, some ice sculptures can be made easily from molds and assembled into larger pieces.

To make an ice carving, you need a large block of ice and a place to do the carving. Once the ice is carved, it should be stored in a walk-in freezer until it is ready to be set up as a centerpiece. To make a carving from a block of ice, prepare a pattern that you can use as a guide. A number of tools are used for ice carving, including ice picks, chisels, combs, and handheld or power saws. Large pieces are cut away from the ice using a saw. Finer cuts are made using chisels. Some chisels have grooved heads to produce special effects. Remember that ice carvings will melt as they are on display. Legs and other supporting parts of the sculpture should be thick enough to last for a few hours without cracking or snapping. If you were making a swan, for example, the neck should be thick enough to hold the head up. Otherwise, the head could snap off and the beautiful effect would be ruined.

When assembling ice sculptures, plan to use a sturdy base. Set the sculpture in a pan connected to a drain or valve that can capture water from the melting ice and transfer it to a tub. The base can be camouflaged with cloth, edible flowers, plants, or other safe decorations.

Garnishes The purpose of a garnish is to add flavor, color, and texture to individual items, individual dishes, composed platters and trays, and buffets in general. A garnish is meant to draw attention to the food, not to overwhelm the food or detract from it in any way.

You may hear the terms *garni* and *garniture* when garnishes are being discussed. **Garni** is a French term that simply means a garnished food or plate. The **garniture** is the item that is used as a garnish.

It used to be that all kinds of things with little eating appeal were used for garnishes simply for color effect. However, because well-trained culinary professionals know the importance of quality in food preparation and presentation, the garde manger thinks of garnishes as food, not simply decoration.

Garnishes cannot be an afterthought. The garde manger needs to put thought into the selection and preparation of garnishes because they must be an integrated part of the dish or presentation. Garnishes should not be boring or overused, like the ho-hum scrap of tired parsley tossed on top of every dish.



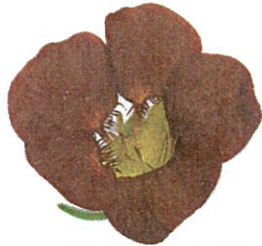


Ice sculpture centerpiece

Here are additional guidelines for garnishing.

- **Function.** Garnishes should be used to create a visual impression and also to add a taste experience.
- **Flavor.** Garnishes should taste fresh and complement the taste of the item they garnish.
- **Color/visual appeal.** Garnishes should be visually attractive as well as good to eat. Typically, they add a different color to the main theme of the dish or presentation. The color of a garnish adds a new effect to the overall dish or presentation (see the table titled “Common Garnishes”).
- **Textural appeal.** Typically, garnishes add a different texture than the dish or presentation with which they are used.
- **Appropriate size.** Keep scale in mind in designing garnishes. If they are too small in proportion to the food presented, they will look lost on the plate. If they are too large, they compete with the food that should be the focus of the dish or presentation.
- **Special effects.** Use fanning cuts (on pickles or strawberries, for example), sequencing, julienne or matchstick shapes, spiral cutting

Common Garnishes

	Color	Effect	Food Garnish
 <p>Source: David Murray and Jules Selmes, Dorling Kindersley</p>	Green	Freshness and vitality	Chives, parsley, fresh herbs, green sprouts, scallions, greens, limes, green peppers
 <p>Source: Dorling Kindersley</p>	Browns and golds	Warmth, comfort, richness	Lemons, bread sticks, bread products, hard-cooked egg wedges, butter curls, yellow peppers, miniature yellow tomatoes
 <p>Source: Neil Fletcher and Matthew Ward/Dorling Kindersley</p>	Oranges and reds	Intensity, desire, hunger	Tomatoes, radishes, radicchio, carrots, red or orange peppers, edible nasturtium flowers

Making a Fan Cut

- 1 Place item on its side on a work surface.
- 2 Cut in paper-thin slices from tip to stem, leaving the flesh at the base of the stem still attached.
- 3 Spread the slices out, using your fingers. It should be spread like a fan.
- 4 Lift the fan carefully onto the plate or platter you are garnishing. Use a knife, spatula, or palette knife. Fruits such as strawberries can also be fanned.



Source: Culinary Institute of America

(using a spiral cutter), crinkle cuts, rosettes (such as radish “roses”), curls, paper-thin cuts, food sculpting, ice sculpting, and molds for soft foods such as aspic or butter.

The garnishes you add to your platters can do much more than make them look attractive. The most effective garnishes are eye-catching, neatly cut, and carefully arranged. They should have a specific relationship to the main items on the platter. If you look at some of the photographs in this chapter you will see that they employ both traditional and innovative garnishes.

Chefs use special tools to create some garnishes. Spiral cutters, zesters, channel knives, special cutters to produce ripple-cut or waffle-cut fruits and vegetables, melon ballers of various sizes, and tourné (bird’s-beak) knives are commonly used to carve fruits and vegetables. (See Chapter 4 for more information about these knives and other small tools.)

- Citrus fruits can be sliced or carved into baskets. The colorful skin can be cut into long strips or grated to scatter over foods.
- Apples and pears can be cut into thin slices and then arranged in overlapping patterns.
- Herbs can be left in whole sprigs, or they may be chopped fine and scattered over the platter.
- Hard-cooked eggs can be sliced, cut into wedges, or chopped.
- Edible flowers and leaves can be scattered decoratively on a dish.
- Small balls (rounds or ovals) of fruits and vegetables can be used to soften a presentation.
- Cucumbers cut into slices or spirals or made into baskets or cups add freshness and coolness to a presentation.
- Strips and curls of carrots and celery add fresh color.

- Brushes made from leeks can be used to apply a dipping sauce or a glaze.
- Roses made from radishes add intensity and elegance.



READING CHECKLIST

What are the purposes of centerpieces and garnishes?

10.4 ASSESSMENT

Reviewing Concepts

1. Name at least five common types of cold food presentations?
2. What are the two ways main items are typically served in a cold food presentation or a buffet?
3. What is the purpose of a garnish?

Critical Thinking

4. **Drawing Conclusions** Why are only pressed (versus whole) caviar and other types of fish eggs used in cooking?
5. **Compare and Contrast** What design element for food arrangements do you think is most important? Why?
6. **Predicting** How is the appeal of a meat dish improved by the use of a garnish?
7. **Drawing Conclusions** Any service of raw shellfish or other seafood comes with a risk. Why would a restaurant take on that risk?
8. **Predicting** If you make an ice carving of a large goblet, what might happen if you made the stem of the goblet very thin?

Test Kitchen

Divide into four teams. Each team will create a small platter as a cold food presentation, complete with garnishes. Evaluate other teams' efforts based on the design elements for food arrangements. Tally the results.

SCIENCE

Smoked Fish

Research how fish, such as salmon and trout, are smoked. Focus on such questions as the following: How long does the process take? At what temperature are they smoked? Is any special type of wood used to produce the smoke? Are herbs or spices used in the smoking process to add flavor? Are there regional or national differences in how fish are smoked?