

21.1

Planning the Menu

READING PREVIEW

Key Concepts

- Understand the purpose of a menu
- Identifying types of menus
- Planning the menu
- Organizing and designing a menu

Vocabulary

- à la carte menu
- California menu
- cyclical menu
- du jour menu
- entrée
- fixed menu
- limited menu
- market research
- menu
- mission statement
- modified à la carte menu
- prix fixe menu
- table d'hôte menu
- table tent menus

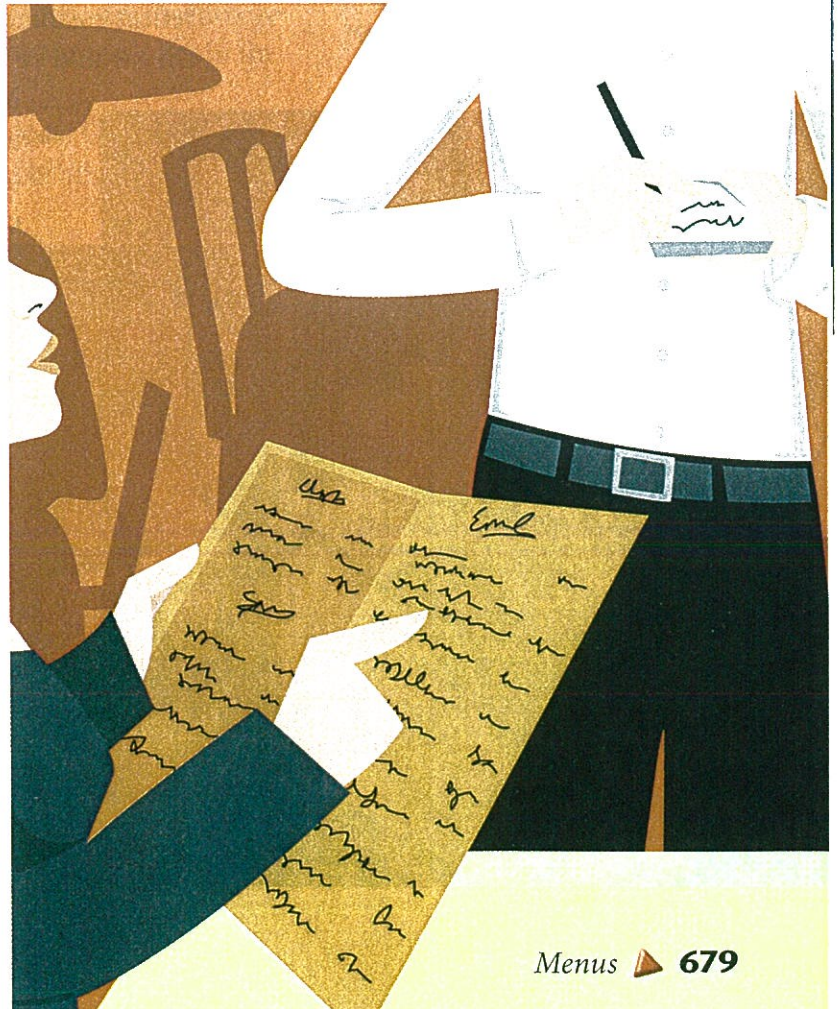
“**A** menu is a powerful tool. It is a marketing and merchandising vehicle and assists the chef in organizing the day’s work.”

— Tom Peer
The Culinary Institute
of America

Purpose of a Menu

A **menu** is a list of food and drink choices available in a restaurant. A menu does much more than tell customers that steaks are flame-broiled or the chocolate cake is homemade. Menus are actually tools with two primary functions: planning and communication.

In most food-service operations, management plans the menu. However, in a hotel, the executive chef typically works with management to plan the menu. For chain restaurants, central management plans the menu. Generally, it is only in individual restaurants that are not part of a chain where a chef has the opportunity to plan a menu.



Menus as Planning Tools A menu is an important planning tool for a food-service operation because it affects every aspect of the operation's business. Typically, seven factors influence the choice of foods on a menu:

- **Customers' Needs and Expectations.** A menu should reflect the market for which it is intended. For example, a coffee shop in a neighborhood of office buildings will have a menu that offers sandwiches for people with little time for lunch. The menu for a restaurant at a beach resort will feature fresh seafood for tourists who expect seafood on the menu. The same idea of meeting a customer's needs applies to cafeterias. A hospital cafeteria will offer simple yet nutritious choices that appeal to the staff as well as the patients.
- **Prices.** Customers expect to pay according to the type of food and service they receive. Office workers who stop at a coffee shop usually want filling food and quick service without spending too much money. On the other hand, tourists on a vacation expect to splurge on a memorable meal, and they pay the check willingly.
- **Mission Statement.** A **mission statement** is a statement of an organization's goal. The mission statement of a restaurant or other food-service establishment must be clear before menu planning can begin. The mission statement must reflect customers' needs and expectations, as well as the price they would be willing to pay for their food. The mission of a Mexican restaurant might be to offer authentic foods of a particular region, while the mission of the snack bar at a health spa might be to offer only low-fat, healthy choices.
- **Type of Food Served.** The type of food on a menu is a direct reflection of the mission statement.
- **Service Style.** Fancy dishes or dishes that require special preparation at the table require a much different level of service than simpler food. Items on the menu determine what style of service will be required. In a cafeteria, for example, which requires minimal service, either the food is on display for easy self-service or it is plated by a minimal number of employees. Contrast that with an expensive restaurant, where several waiters sometimes work together on just one table.
- **Workers' Skills.** The food on a menu determines how many workers will be needed to

FIGURE 21-1
Lunch Counter

Looking at menu choices for a quick lunch.

Communicating *What would be an appropriate mission statement for this food-service establishment?*



prepare and serve the food. A French restaurant may require French chefs (or chefs who have trained in French cooking) and a wait staff who speaks French. A fast-food restaurant will require minimal training for staff.

- **Required Equipment.** The food on a menu determines what sort of equipment is required in the kitchen. A high-end steak restaurant may need an open-flame grill capable of using hickory wood, while a health spa snack bar might only need a couple of blenders to make shakes. When menus are modified, you also need to take the availability of equipment into consideration.
- **Competitors.** Before planning a menu, it is important to visit competing food-service operations that have the same mission as your business. You need to see what they are doing because you will inevitably be compared to them.

Menus as Communication Tools The menu is like a letter written directly to customers. It often provides such information as the location of your food establishment, the prices for food, the hours of operation, and sometimes even a history of the establishment. Menus offer an opportunity to go into detail about a new food item or a special cooking technique. Menus come in all sizes, but in terms of advertising, even the smallest menu can be as effective as a billboard for telling the public what you want them to know. Menus are essentially tools for communicating. A well-designed menu communicates in the following ways:

- **Informing Customers about Food Choices.** On its most basic level, a menu lists the food your establishment offers.



CHEF'S TIP

QUIET TIME

Take your time when creating a menu. Work in a quiet place where you can focus without interruptions. Test your concepts by asking for feedback from coworkers.

FOCUS ON NUTRITION

Healthy Eating

People have recently become interested in eating healthier meals. Keep this in mind when planning a menu. Include more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Focus on ways to reduce calories and fats. Try new cooking methods. It's all good for business—and good for your customers.

FIGURE 21-2

Informing Customers

Customers study a menu to decide on their food choices.

Recognizing Patterns Have you ever felt that a menu has influenced your choice of food?



CHEF'S TIP

KEEP MENUS CLEAN

Replace menus when they start to show signs of wear and tear. No one wants to handle a menu if it has stains on it or the pages are bent. A soiled or damaged menu communicates a negative message.

Customers want to know exactly what kind of food to expect. In a high-end restaurant with unusual ingredients or cooking methods, this might require a great deal of detail for each specific item. In a different sort of restaurant, you might not need to be very descriptive at all—just the name of the item will do. Not all descriptions need to be written. You could use a symbol to indicate a dish's degree of spiciness or whether a dish is vegetarian. It's helpful to think of your mission statement when describing individual food choices. You can even take some space on the menu to describe your mission in terms the customer will understand and appreciate.

- **Influencing Customer Choices.** A menu can influence customer choices in many ways. You can use the menu descriptions to tell customers about your establishment's most popular items. You can use the menu to list the day's special or featured items. Some restaurants use the menu to tell customers that a dish is recommended by the chef. Some menus use symbols, such as four stars, to indicate particularly popular dishes. Overall, the menu is a valuable selling tool when used effectively. It acts as not only a communication tool but also as a marketing tool. A menu influences what items customers choose, and ultimately affects their dining experience (as well as their decision to return or become a regular customer).
- **Creating an Impression.** First impressions matter. The menu is your chance to project an image for the restaurant. Decisions about the cover, the quality of paper, the use of artwork, and how the menu items are positioned all communicate a message to the customer. For example, a leather menu cover identifies a restaurant that wishes to be perceived as a higher-end, more formal, location. A menu that is printed on a paper placemat indicates that the dining experience will be more casual and probably much less expensive. A handwritten menu on a chalkboard with balloons attached indicates an informal setting where families might feel welcome, as does an oversized, plastic-covered menu with playfully named dishes.



Reading Checkpoint

What are the two primary functions of a menu?

Types of Menus

The type of menu chosen for a food establishment is based on a number of factors, including pricing considerations, location, type of customer,

and hours of operation. There are many styles of menus. Some of the most popular types of menu are:

- À la carte and modified à la carte menus
- California menus
- Du jour menus
- Table d'hôte and prix fixe menus
- Fixed menus
- Cyclical menus
- Limited menus

À la Carte and Modified à la Carte Menus An à la carte menu (AH LA CART) is a menu on which each food item or beverage is priced and served separately. Typically, an à la carte menu is for a specific meal, such as lunch or dinner. This type of menu is popular because customers can choose exactly what they want as main courses, side dishes, appetizers, salads, or desserts. The à la carte menu offers the freedom to mix and match according to individual taste. A customer may choose two appetizers and a salad rather than choosing a main course, for example. Hotels and upscale restaurants often use à la carte menus.

On a **modified à la carte menu**, appetizers and desserts are usually priced and served separately. Often the main course will include a soup or salad as well as a starch, vegetable, and possibly a beverage. This type of menu is often found in family-style restaurants.

California Menu A California menu is a single menu listing breakfast, lunch, and dinner foods. It offers customers the freedom to choose any item at any time of day. California menus are especially popular with food-service establishments that are open 24 hours. They are also used for hotel room service.

Du Jour Menu A du jour menu (DOO ZHOOR) lists food that is served only on that particular day. The next day, a different du jour menu will be offered. The words “du jour” are French for “of the day.” Sometimes a restaurant has only one or two daily specials that are made just for that day. A soup du jour, for example, is a soup made just for that day. These restaurants will have a du jour menu in addition to their standard à la carte menu.

FIGURE 21-3
Du Jour Menu

A restaurant's specials of the day.
Drawing Conclusions What is the best way to present a du jour menu, from both the restaurant's and the customer's point of view?

🍷 Today's Specials *🍷*
Friday, June 7

Appetizers

Louisiana Duck & Okra Gumbo	7.00
Oven-Roasted Shrimp with Rosemary White Beans	8.00

Entrees

Grilled Filet Mignon Medallions with Mushroom Sauce served with Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes	21.50
Seared Wild Salmon with Crispy Polenta, Goat Cheese and Glazed Baby Carrots	18.00

Desserts

Glazed Baked Apple on Puff Pastry with Vanilla Ice Cream	6.50
Hot Molten Chocolate Cake with Cherry Compote	7.00

Prix fixe menu ►

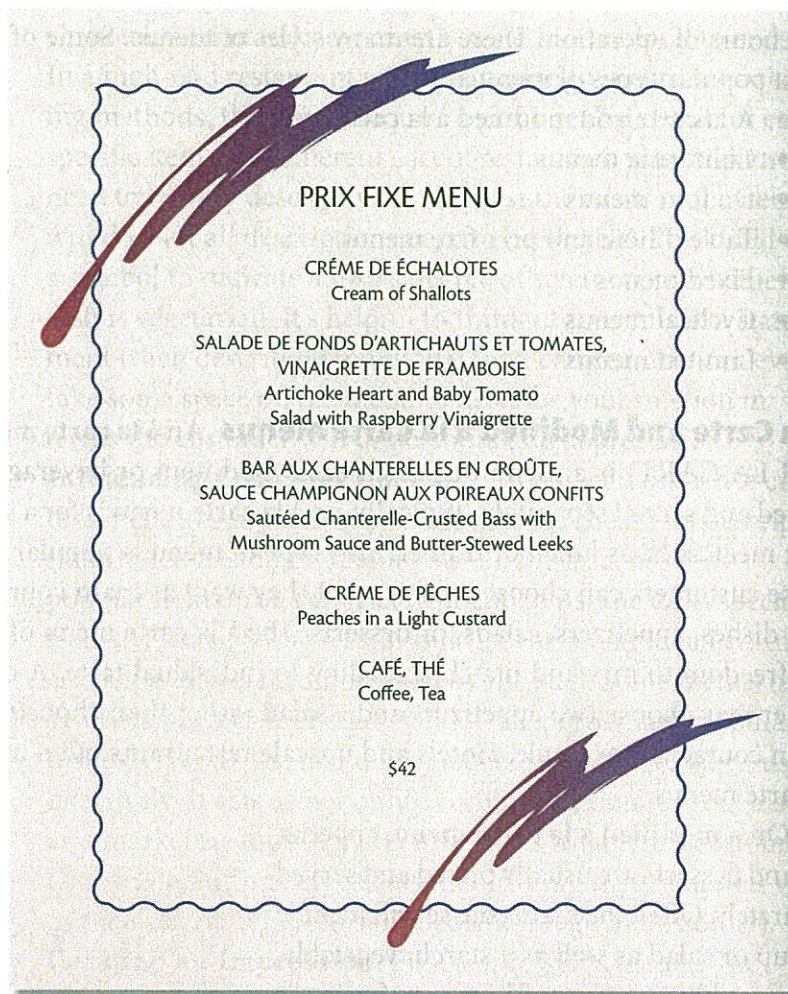


Table d'Hôte and Prix Fixe Menus A **table d'hôte** (TAH-blah DOHT) **menu** offers a complete meal—from an appetizer to a dessert and often including a beverage—for a set price. Banquets often feature a table d'hôte menu. For example, diners might choose in advance from four meals: beef, chicken, fish, or vegetarian. Each meal would include an appetizer, a salad, rolls, a main course, a dessert, and coffee or tea. Individual meals might be priced separately.

A **prix fixe** (PREE FEEKS) **menu** is similar to the table d'hôte menu. A prix fixe menu typically offers a complete meal, often including a beverage, for a set price. Sometimes diners are offered a choice for one or more of the courses, and sometimes diners can choose, for a supplemental charge, a luxury item such as lobster or caviar. Most of the time the price of a prix fixe menu is relatively low because it reduces production costs by allowing the kitchen to operate at a set pace and flow. If the same dishes were ordered à la carte, the bill would be much higher. Both casual restaurants and upscale restaurants use prix fixe menus.

Fixed Menu A **fixed menu** offers the same items every day. Some customers like fixed menus because they continue to return to a

restaurant for a favorite dish and would be disappointed if the dish weren't offered. For this reason, many neighborhood and ethnic restaurants use a fixed menu, although they often supplement the menu with du jour offerings.

Cyclical Menu A **cyclical menu** (SICK-li-cal) is written for a certain period of time and then it repeats itself. For example, a cyclical menu (also called a cycle menu) might repeat after three weeks, although the time between cycles may vary based on seasonal availability of ingredients and other factors. Some cyclical menus change four times a year, according to the seasons. Some change every week, so the same food is offered every Monday, different food is offered every Tuesday, and so on. Longer-term cyclical menus are particularly suited for institutions such as hospitals, schools, and cafeterias where the same people are being served each day. Weekly cyclical menus are particularly suited to family, casual, and neighborhood restaurants.

Limited A **limited menu** offers a limited range of choices to the customer. For example, a restaurant might offer a limited menu of four sandwiches, two soups, and a salad for lunch. A fast-food menu is an example of a limited menu. Limited menus make it easy to keep track of costs because there are typically fewer ingredients.



**Reading
Checkpoint**

What are seven common types of menus?

Planning a Menu

When you write a menu, the goal is to please the customer as well as the owner. It is possible, with careful planning, to do both. Keep these four important considerations in mind when planning a menu:

- Type of place and customers
- Facility, staff, and equipment limitations
- Balance and variety
- Truthfulness

CHEF'S TIP

COLLECT YOUR THOUGHTS

Whenever you have a menu idea, write it down and keep it in a file folder for future reference. Put any copies of menus that inspire you in the same file.



FIGURE 21-4
Cyclical Menu

Colleges and institutions often have menus that are cyclical.

Drawing Conclusions *What period of time would you use as a cycle in your school cafeteria?*

Type of Place and Customers It's important to understand your customers in relation to your type of food-service establishment. You need to include specific menu items that are appropriate for both your type of place and your type of customer. For example, if you have a family seafood restaurant, consider that some non-seafood items will make the menu more interesting and will offer an alternative for family members or other guests who may not want seafood. Likewise, if you are running the food service for a senior center, consider that they might welcome something entirely new on the menu. Seniors may not have an opportunity to eat anywhere else, and variations on the menu will add variety to their lives. A menu with a theme has specific characteristics. You could introduce a Mexican or other themed meal as a special surprise from time to time.

Understanding your place and your customer involves four additional factors:

- **Geography and Culture.** People have food preferences. Preferences are often connected to geography and culture. In an area of Minnesota populated by people with a Swedish heritage, hearty soups with root vegetables might be a winter preference. The same item in Florida might be unappealing.

- **Economics.** People need to feel they are getting their money's worth when they go out to eat. The price on a menu should reflect the value expected. If an expensive restaurant delivers a sense that exotic ingredients were used, the customer will be satisfied. If a budget meal is advertised at another place, the price needs to match the customers' expectations.

- **Population Density.** The number of people living in an area determines the potential number of customers. If you are in a remote rural area, it would be unrealistic to plan a menu with several pages of choices, because much of your

food would be wasted. If, however, you are in the heart of a large city, such a menu would be appropriate.

- **Age.** Special menus or sections within a menu may be required for certain age groups. A family restaurant may require a special children's menu with limited offerings in smaller portions at lower prices. Senior citizens also provide a special menu situation. Elderly people tend to eat less

FIGURE 21-5
Influences on the Menu
This restaurant has a special children's menu.

Drawing Conclusions Why might a restaurant have a children's menu?



and often have flexibility in their schedules to dine outside the regular hours. They may also need food choices that are easy to chew.

Facility, Staff, and Equipment Limitations How many people a dining facility can serve is influenced by its menu and the service it requires. If a room is used as a cafeteria or for buffet-style dining, it can serve more people than if it is used for a menu with many different courses served at a leisurely pace. If space becomes a problem, a menu change could help accommodate more people.

Every business needs to make money to stay in operation. As you plan a menu, you also need to keep in mind the limits of your equipment and your staff. For example, you may want to feature French Onion Soup on your menu, but if you don't have individual ovenproof bowls or the extra staff required to apply the finishing touches, it could be too costly for your restaurant.

The cost of labor is one of the biggest expenses in the food business. The best way to maximize labor is to know the existing skills of all your workers and write a menu that uses those skills well. You could teach workers new skills to suit a new menu, but training costs time and money. On the other hand, under-using workers' time and skills is inefficient for business. The workers feel under-challenged, which leads to boredom, dissatisfaction, and job turnover.

Balance and Variety The specific items on your menu need to be appropriate for your type of place, your customers, your staff, and your equipment. They also need to be balanced and have variety. Typically, a balanced menu is one that has been written with the following considerations in mind:

- **Variety.** People appreciate variety. It makes dining more interesting and encourages return visits to a restaurant. You can add variety to a menu in a number of ways. You can use different cooking methods. For example, offer some fried, baked, or sautéed dishes and serve them with side dishes that are also prepared in a variety of different ways, such as pureed, steamed, or stir-fried. You can use different tastes and textures. Vary taste by varying spices. Make some food crunchy and others soft. Finally, use color. Remember the saying, "We eat with our eyes."

CHEF'S TIP

PLAY IT UP

A playful children's menu with colorful pictures and drawings will make children feel special. Activities on the menu may keep children busy and quiet while they wait for their food.



FIGURE 21-6
Equipment Limitations

A small kitchen cannot easily increase space or equipment.

Predicting If you were a chef in a small kitchen, would you focus on dishes that are easy to prepare and don't use many pans?

CHEF'S TIP

INVENTORY CONTROL

To increase your number of menu offerings, choose recipes that use the same cut of meat, poultry, or seafood so you will have better control of your inventory.



FIGURE 21-7 Regional Cuisine

Different regions have different cuisines.

Applying Concepts Why would a restaurant want to serve regional specialties?

- **Balance.** A menu needs to accommodate different tastes. You need to offer a balance of choices. Each food section should be considered for balance. For example, appetizers might be hot or cold, cooked or raw. Main course choices could include fish, poultry, meat, and vegetarian options.
- **Special Needs.** Some customers have special needs that could be addressed on the menu. You could indicate a dish's suitability for diabetics, vegetarians, or someone with food allergies. You might also indicate that a dish could be adjusted to make it more appropriate for someone with special needs. For example, you could adjust a dish to make it suitable for someone with low-fat or low-calorie requirements.
- **Religion.** Many religious faiths have dietary restrictions. For example, some people have a tradition of sacrificing desserts or not eating meat at certain times of the year. Other people

do not eat pork. Sensitivity to these considerations broadens the appeal of a menu.

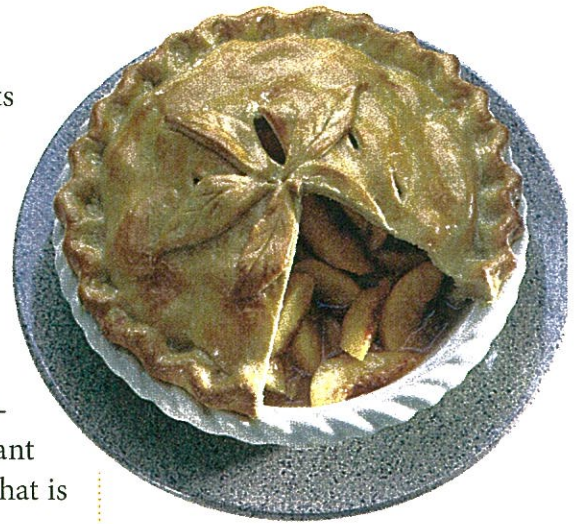
- **Regional Cuisine.** People are proud of the region where they live and the food specialties found there. Maine is known for steamed lobster, and Texas has a reputation for barbecued meat. People enjoy seeing these things on a menu when they visit those regions and are more likely to patronize a restaurant that offers them.
- **Trends.** Collecting information to find out what customers like or dislike is called **market research**. Questionnaires, phone interviews, and observations are all stud-

ied to spot trends. Use these reports to find out what your potential customers favor so you can include those items as menu choices.

- **Various Price Levels.** You will need to have some dishes that are at the high end of your customers' affordability scale and other dishes that are less expensive. All your prices need to be within your customers' range.
- **Product Availability.** Before listing anything on the menu, be certain that you can get a sufficient supply of it. If you want to avoid reprinting the menu, you can put "in season" for items that may have limited availability, such as summer fruit or seasonal fish. The quality of most food depends on

the seasons. Food that is in season will be at the peak of its flavor, texture, and color. For example, peaches are better in the summer, but cranberries are freshest in the fall and winter.

Truthfulness Many laws are designed to protect consumers from fraudulent claims related to foods and menus. Collectively, these laws are called the Truth in Menu laws. They are administered by dozens of agencies, but all focus on the accurate labeling of food. The laws are constantly being revised, so it is important in planning a menu to be honest—both in regard to the price that is charged and the food that is served.



▲ Peach pie

Truth-in-Menu Laws

Claim	Description
Quantity	Amounts and weights must be accurate. For example, if the weight shown is before the item is cooked, the menu must say so.
Quality	The stated quality must be accurate. “Prime” meat must actually be “Prime.” It cannot be “Choice.”
Price	The price must be accurate and not misleading. If six oysters are sold at a specific price, then six oysters should be delivered on the plate.
Brand Names	Brand names, such as Tabasco Sauce® or Godiva Chocolates®, must be represented accurately.
Product Identification	The product listed in the menu must be the product in the dish. If lobster was supposed to be included in a chowder, you cannot substitute monkfish.
Point of Origin	The location of ingredients must be accurate. Vermont maple syrup actually has to be from Vermont.
Merchandising Terms	Terms used to encourage customers to purchase menu items must be completely accurate. If the menu says that salad comes with the main course, be sure a salad comes with all main courses.
Means of Preservation	The method by which food on the menu was preserved must be accurate. This means, for example, that frozen fish can’t be used if the menu says the fish is fresh.
Methods of Preparation	The method of preparation must be accurate. If the menu says the cod was broiled, it cannot be baked.
Verbal and Visual Presentation	Pictures and descriptions of food on the menu must be accurate in every detail.
Dietary and Nutritional Information	It is critically important that any dietary or nutritional information be completely correct. All dietary and nutritional data must be supported with statistical data.





CHEF'S TIP

ENTRÉES

In the United States, an entrée is the main course. In some European countries, an entrée is the first course.



Reading Checkpoint

What are four important considerations to keep in mind when planning a menu?

Organizing and Designing a Menu

Three important aspects of creating a menu are organizing the menu, designing the actual menu that will be put in your customers' hands, and writing the menu descriptions.

Organizing a Menu Food is organized into categories on a menu. Usually the categories are listed in the sequence in which they are to be eaten. For example, on a lunch or dinner menu, appetizers are usually the first category and hot beverages are the last. Menus are also organized within each of these categories. For example, if the main course category has two poultry dishes and three beef dishes, the poultry would typically be listed together, as would the beef.

You should have a balanced number of categories and within those categories a balanced number of choices. A lunch menu might offer fewer choices in each category than a dinner menu. If eight main courses are listed, there might be two beef, two poultry, one fish, two vegetables, and one pasta option. Within the categories, there should also be a variety of cooking styles, such as grilling, frying, baking, and roasting.

Ethnic menus may have a unique organization and there are many variations even among relatively similar restaurants. However, as a general guideline, for non-ethnic restaurants, menu categories are typically shown on a menu in the following sequence:

- **Hors d'oeuvres.** You would list hors d'oeuvres on a menu only in a formal situation or perhaps at a banquet.
- **Appetizers.** Appetizers (also called starters) might be further broken down as cold and hot appetizers. Soups are sometimes included in the Appetizers category.
- **Soups.** Soups may be further broken down as cold or hot soups. Soups may also be included in the Appetizers category.
- **Salads.** American-style restaurants would tend to place salads before the main course. European-style restaurants might place the salad after the main course.
- **Sandwiches.** On a lunch menu or a casual dinner menu, you might find sandwiches listed as a separate category. Sandwiches might be further broken down as hot or cold sandwiches.
- **Main Courses.** The main course is usually broken down as hot or cold and then further broken down by type of meat or other similar feature. A main course is also referred to as an **entrée** (AHN-tray) in the United States.

ST. ANDREW'S CAFÉ

Lunch Menu

Soups

- Cuban Style Black Bean Soup 4.
with Smoked Jalapeño Peppers and Croutons
- Curried Apple and Roasted Butternut Squash Soup 4.
with Cilantro and Toasted Coconut
- St. Andrew's Café Soup Sampler 5.

Starters and Salads

- Warm Risotto Cake with Fresh Mozzarella 8.
with Shaved Prosciutto and Grilled Vegetables
- Grilled Jumbo Shrimp with Pesto 9.
with Couscous and Arugula Salad
- St. Andrew's Caesar Salad 6.
with Parmesan Croutons



- Autumn Pear and Roquefort Garden Salad 6.
with Grapes, Hazelnuts and Verjus Vinaigrette

- Warm Spinach Salad 7.
with Smoked Bacon Dressing and Pickled Red Onions

Wood-Fired Pizzas

- Thai-Style Barbecue Chicken Pizza 10.
Aged Jack Cheese and Tomatillo Salsa on top



- Pizza Margherita 10.
Tomatoes, Basil and Mozzarella



Indicates a Vegetarian Selection

Entrées & Specialty Sandwiches

- Grilled Steak Caesar Entrée Salad 15.
with Parmesan Croutons
- Japanese Udon Noodles and Jumbo Shrimp and Scallops 16.
Served with Vegetables, Mushrooms and Ponzu Sauce
- Sautéed Pork Loin 14.
Served with Prune Chutney, Herbed Spaetzle and Braised Cabbage
- Vegetable Pita Sandwich 8.
Grilled Vegetables, Basil and Sun Dried Tomatoes Served on Warm Pita with Tabouleh Salad
- Smoked Ham & Fresh Mozzarella Panini Sandwich 10.
with Tomatoes and Basil



Desserts

- St. Andrew's Dessert Sampler 6.
A special sampling of our Pastry Chef's delicacies of the day
- Seasonal Fruit Crisp 5.
A variety of Assorted Fresh Berries with Dark Chocolate Served with Oatmeal-Walnut Crisp Topping and Ice Cream
- Sorbet of the Day 5.
Made daily with fresh fruit
- White Chocolate and Honey Cheesecake 6.
with Strawberries



Indicates Nuts in Selection

- **Side Dishes.** Vegetables and starches that accompany the main course are usually listed as side dishes.
- **Desserts.** Sometimes restaurants that want to emphasize their dessert offerings will provide a separate dessert menu.
- **Hot Beverages.** Hot beverages that are served with dessert are usually listed last on the menu. Cold beverages, including alcoholic drinks, are often listed on a separate menu or list. If both cold and hot beverages are listed on the menu, they will typically be broken down as hot or cold.

Designing a Menu Because the menu is a communication tool between you and the customer, you need to be concerned about just what you communicate with your menu.

The three most common menu formats are:

- **Printed Menu.** The printed menu is presented to customers to look at. This is the most common type of menu. It often has a cover and back, with the actual menu printed inside on heavy paper. These are permanent menus.



FIGURE 21-8 **Lunch Menu**

Notice that salads and starters have been combined under one category.

Analyzing Information Why do you think this menu has a separate category for wood-fired pizzas?

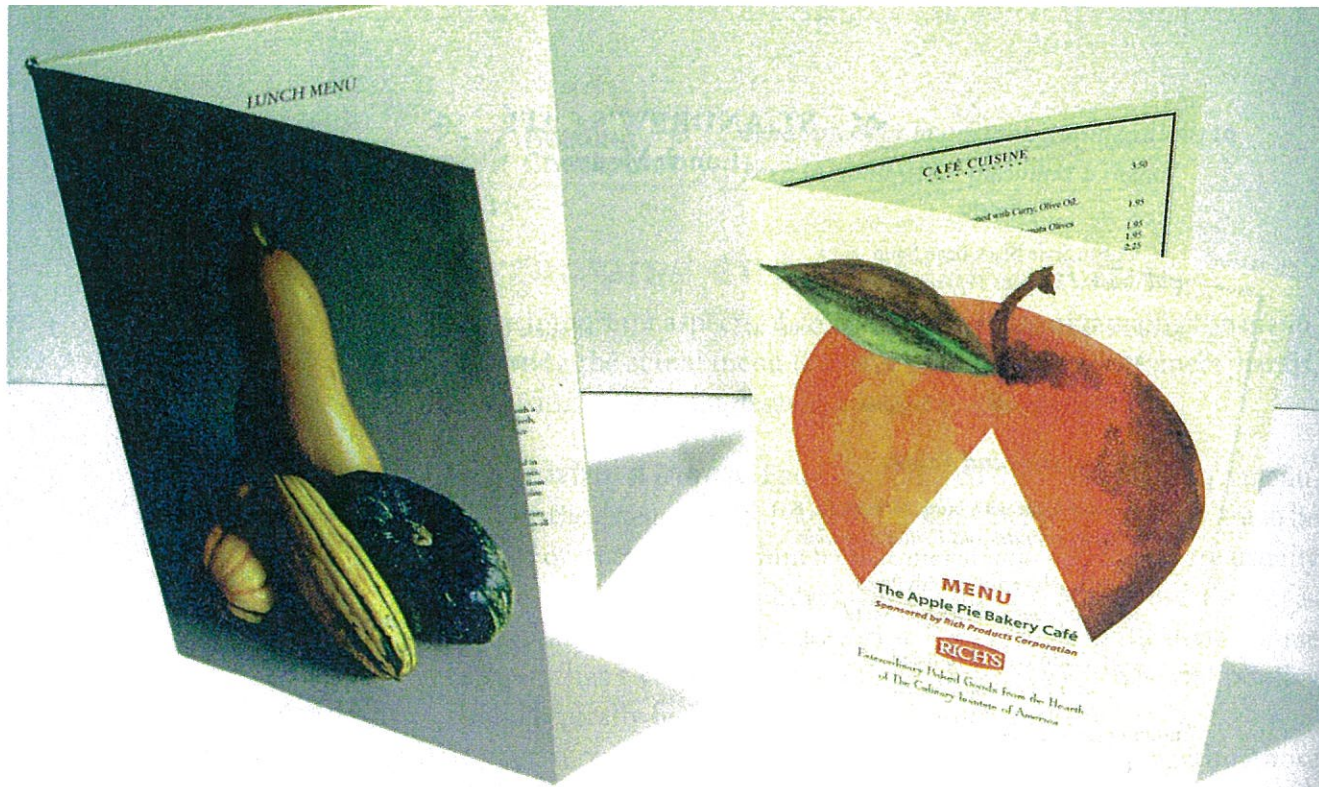


FIGURE 21-9
Menu Design

Two contrasting menu covers.
Comparing/Contrasting What message do these menus communicate?



Mexican restaurant menu

When specials are offered, an insert or clip-on is attached to the menu. Some establishments place folded cards, known as **table tent menus**, directly on the tables to tell customers about specials.

- **Spoken Menu.** Some restaurants have their servers memorize the menu and then repeat it to the customers. This is called a spoken menu. It usually has a limited number of choices. The spoken menu creates a more intimate feeling in a restaurant, but some people find it demanding because they can't linger over the menu and study the choices.
- **Menu Board.** The menu board is on display, usually on the wall or an easel, for everyone to see. Menu items are either handwritten or printed. The menu board is associated with casual dining.

On written menus, design details such as materials, colors, and images communicate your message just as strongly as words do. Your pictures, colors, words, and materials set a tone. They tell your customers what to expect in their dining experience. You need to make the menu send a clear written and visual message about your place of business and the food being served.

Follow these guidelines in designing a printed menu:

- Make sure the menu contains your restaurant's vitals (name, address, and phone, at least).
- Design the shape and size of the menu so it is in keeping with your restaurant's concept.
- Avoid photos inside the menu.

- Emphasize the items on the menu, not their prices.
- Use graphics sparingly.
- Use print, not a hard-to-read script.
- Use numbers for the prices; do not spell them out.

Writing a Menu When writing the descriptions of your menu items, keep these guidelines in mind:

- Keep your descriptions free from misspellings and grammatical errors.
- Make sure the language reflects the restaurant's concept and style.
- Make the food sound attractive.
- Eliminate all unnecessary words.
- Do not use restaurant jargon.
- Provide customers with a road map for their dining experience, one for which they will not require further directions.
- Make sure the menu is easy to read.
- Use words that are in keeping with current food and restaurant trends.
- Be positive.



What is the typical order of menu categories for a non-ethnic restaurant?

21.1 ASSESSMENT

Reviewing Concepts

1. What are the two primary functions of a menu?
2. What are seven common types of menus?
3. What are four important considerations to keep in mind when planning a menu?
4. What is the typical order of menu categories for a non-ethnic restaurant?

Critical Thinking

5. **Drawing Conclusions** Equipment availability is important to remember when planning a menu. How could too many soup choices on the menu create a problem?
6. **Applying Concepts** A vegetarian diet book tops the best-seller list for two months in a row. How could that affect the choices of foods on your menu?
7. **Analyzing Information** Every entrée on a menu is deep-fried and all the sides are white. What is

wrong with the menu balance and how could you correct it?

Test Kitchen

Divide into four teams. Each team will develop a semi à la carte dinner menu for a restaurant. Before writing the menu, each team will develop a mission statement for the restaurant. Each team will then produce one item, their signature item, from their Appetizer category and one from their Main Course category. Evaluate each team's results.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Descriptive Writing

Write descriptions for three du jour menu items. Tempt the customers by appealing to their sense of taste, touch, smell, and sight.