Catering checklist

Tick off the catering jobs from six weeks out to collection day. The Excel version works out quantities from your guest numbers.

Event details

Event and date	
Confirmed guests	
Service style (plated, buffet, canapés)	
Caterer and phone	
Equipment supplier and phone	

6 weeks before

- ☐ Confirm the menu, service style and guest numbers with the caterer
- ☐ Collect dietary needs and allergies from guests

4 weeks before

- ☐ Check the venue kitchen: power, sockets, water, fridge space
- ☐ Order hot cupboards, chafing dishes, urns or boilers if the venue has none

3 weeks before

- ☐ Order crockery, cutlery, glassware and linen
- ☐ Work out quantities: guest count plus 10% for plates and cutlery

1 to 2 weeks before

- ☐ Confirm final numbers and send the dietary list to the caterer
- ☐ Confirm delivery times for food, drinks and equipment
- ☐ Plan ice: how much, delivery time and where it will be stored

Day before

- ☐ Count plates, glasses and cutlery against the order
- ☐ Chill drinks
- ☐ Check chafing fuel, extension leads, bins and bin bags

On the day

- ☐ Set tables and check place settings against the seating plan
- ☐ Label dishes with allergens and brief serving staff
- ☐ Set up a clearing station for dirty plates and glasses

After the event

- [ ] Scrape and stack crockery, return glasses to their racks
- [ ] Count everything back before collection and note breakages
- [ ] Send the caterer feedback and settle the final invoice

How much to order

Planning figures from the Expo Hire crockery, cutlery and glassware hire guides. Adjust them for your menu and service.

Item	Allow
Plates and cutlery	Guest count, plus 10%
Plates for a hot buffet with starter and main	2 to 2.5 per guest
Plates for a cold buffet	About 1.5 per guest
Teaspoons after a seated dinner	1.5 per guest
Wine glasses, 3-hour reception	About 2.5 per guest
Champagne flutes for a toast	1.5 per guest
Pint glasses, 3-hour bar	2 per guest
Hi-ball glasses, mixed drinks bar	1 per guest

Order list

Item	Qty	Supplier	Checked in

Free template from Expo Hire. Editable versions and more templates: expohire.com/event-planning-templates