

Guest Experience & Surplus Management Guide

GUIDELINE

Coordinate with planners on meal service windows. In the final 15–20 minutes, monitor guest flow and slow replenishment to match remaining attendance.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

- FOH Servers
- Stewarding
- Banquet Leads
- Catering Sales
- Banquet Captains

HOW TO USE

Follow these steps to maintain guest satisfaction while reducing plate waste and managing surplus responsibly. Adapt the guest-facing talking points to match your company's brand voice and the specific event tone.

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Close meal service smoothly while maintaining guest satisfaction and minimizing surplus. This phase balances hospitality with efficiency.

Before Service: Coordination Checklist

- Confirm service start and end times with planner and clarify expected late arrivals and any service window changes.
- Brief the front-of-house staff on guest talking points and end of service plan during a pre-shift huddle.
- Assign one "end-of-service lead" to monitor guest flow and coordinate adjustments.

During Service

Guest Facing Communication

Train all front-of-house staff to use consistent, positive language:

- Encourage mindful portions: "You can always come back for seconds." "Try what looks good—we'll keep trays replenished and fresh."
- Acknowledge popular items running low: "That dish was a hit! We still have great options available."
- Explain consolidation if noticed: "You might notice us consolidating displays—it's how we keep everything fresh while managing abundance without excess."

Observe & Report

As staff circulate, make quick mental notes:

- Which items are guests leaving uneaten?
- Which dishes draw repeat servings?
- Any quality concerns (e.g., guests abandoning items after first bite)?
- Share observations in real time with the banquet captain or culinary lead.

Final 20 Minutes

As staff circulate, make quick mental notes:

- Monitor guest flow as traffic slows to determine when to consolidate and refill.
- Stop replenishing large trays unless requested by planner.
- Consolidate partial trays to maintain visual appeal.
- Remove empty or near-empty trays promptly.
- Keep stations tidy and intentional—avoid drawing attention to missing items.

Running low near the end signals right-sized planning, not poor service.

After Service

- Handle surplus: Identify donation-safe items, redirect to staff meals, compost scraps.
- Photograph leftover food and note what ran low or had surplus.
- Share findings with culinary and catering sales.
- Use observations to adjust portion specs, vessel sizing, or menu planning.

Quick Summary

- Plan with the planner.
- Monitor guest flow.
- Refill less, consolidate more.
- Manage surplus safely.
- Capture learnings for next time.