

APPENDIX D: WASTE REDUCING MENU, GUIDING PRINCIPLES

WASTE REDUCING MENU THEORY

Across the hospitality industry, the primary goal is to satisfy guest needs and desires, which can translate into an overabundance of food. The downside of this overabundance is that it can result in food waste - both during ingredient preparation and in the form of leftover food on guests' plates or on the buffet.

The Waste Reducing Menu intentionally creates opportunities for all ingredients to be used, including leftover ingredients, while still offering high-quality food to the guest. And, any safely preserved leftover food can be donated after service. The key to successfully reducing waste through menu design is using ingredients multiple times across brunch and lunch menus. Additionally, most ingredients in the brunch menu aren't mixed with other ingredients or heavily cooked, which makes it easier to repurpose them in the lunch menu, resulting in little, if any, overproduction.

Ingredients are carefully chosen based on our "Produce Yield Ranking Tool," (See [Appendix G](#)) which rates ingredients based on how much is typically considered edible (e.g., food). For example, a tomato is a 5 - which means the entire product is edible. Strawberries are a 4 - which means that it's mostly edible except for a small portion, the leaves and stem. All the fruit and vegetables in the Waste Reducing Menu are a 4 or a 5, which encourages hotel chefs to reduce trim by using the entire product.

This menu concept will require a team effort with participation from the sales staff, the banquet staff, culinary staff, stewarding staff, and food and beverage staff. It is an imperative that all parties are trained on their role in implementing this type of menu. Here are a few of the key responsibilities for each of these roles:

- Catering Sales staff – selling the menu, explaining the additional strategies, and working on accurate guest counts at all stages
- Culinary staff – brainstorming ideas, working with sales staff to get accurate numbers for ordering, prepping, and firing
- Banquet staff – managing the food service and flow to ensure abundant appearance on buffets with minimal post-service waste, shutting down buffets when required during service, and consolidating trays

- Stewarding staff – working with the culinary staff to salvage all food that can be recovered either for donation or for reuse during lunch

STRATEGIES BEYOND THE MENU THAT REDUCE WASTE

While trim and kitchen waste can be a problem for a large food service establishment, it is only half of the puzzle. The client and the guests can also do their part to help the hotel prevent and reduce food waste from banquet events.

- **Headcount:** One of the primary ways to prevent food waste from an event is to have an accurate guest count prior to food being ordered, but especially before food is prepped and served. When speaking with clients about this menu, reinforce the need for an accurate guest count at each stage in the production process. Key points for waste reduction where the most accurate numbers are needed include: number of days in advance for accurate ordering, number of days required for accurate prepping, and day of changes to drive the amount that is fired.
- **Guest Preferences:** In addition to accurate guest counts, understanding guests' food preferences can also prevent common sources of food waste from a buffet. A few items to discuss with the client may include:
 - > Bread and rolls – do you need to supply enough for every guest or will there likely be a portion who do not eat carbohydrates or are gluten free or low carb?
 - > Desserts – for a lunch buffet will guests want large desserts or are smaller bite size options better? Our audits have shown that desserts at lunch are often a large source of overproduction due to the use of a very generous portions per guest. Chefs can consider decreasing the dessert portion size for lunch.
- **Service Style:** The way the food is served can also impact the amount of waste generated. Consider discussing the following non-traditional buffet set-ups with your guest:
 - > **Stations** – This controls the amount of food exposed to guests, minimizing plate waste and allowing for more reuse or donation post-service since the food was not exposed

to potential food safety risks. It requires more staff and can be slower; trade-offs should be discussed with the client.

- > **Hybrid buffets** – A portion of the meal may be served plated and a portion may be served via buffet.
 - > **Buffet replenishment** – Discuss with the client how the buffet service and replenishment should run to minimize overproduction and over-service resulting in unrecoverable food. Propose the following options:
 - » Decrease the number of lines to consolidate trays, or, if more buffet lines are preferred use smaller dishes and consolidate pans as they are brought to the back of the house for replenishment
 - » Using smaller portions and pans as service moves along to create a look of abundance with less food
 - » Ask when buffet staff can stop replenishing trays based on pace of service and how many people have already eaten
 - **Donation:** When prevention is not possible, discuss with your clients your intention to donate any food that is over produced and still food safe to serve.
- Consider the following resources when looking for a partner:
- > Feeding America
 - > Further with Food
 - > Food Donation Connection
 - > Food Rescue US
- If clients have concerns over liability, remind them that the **Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Act** protects your business from liability when donating to a non-profit organization.
 - > Requirements: (1) The food must be donated to a nonprofit organization in good faith, meaning that the food must be donated with the honest belief that it is safe to eat. (2) The food must meet all federal (U.S. Food & Drug Administration), state, and local quality and labeling requirements, even if it is not readily marketable due to appearance, age, freshness, grade, size, surplus, or other conditions. (3) The nonprofit organization that receives the donated food must distribute it to needy individuals without receiving funds. (4) The end recipient must not pay anything of monetary value for the donated food.