

# IN-FLIGHT CATERING MANAGEMENT



Sanhakot Vithayaporn

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Dr. Sanhakot Vithayaporn

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## Author

Sanhakot  
Vithayaporn

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## Editorial Team

Ruangthong Manjit/  
Chutima Sampantha

## Designer

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Veeradon Thamrongvich

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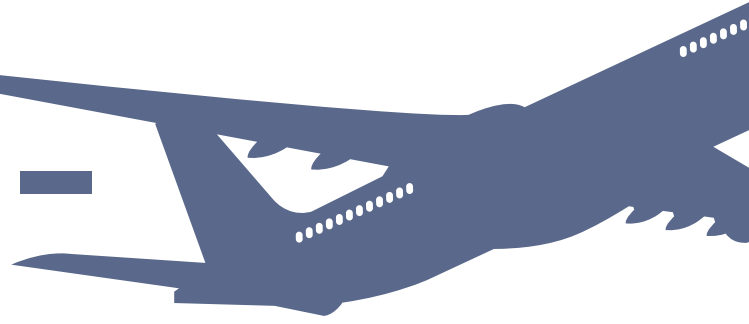
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[www.siamclmt.com](http://www.siamclmt.com)

Email: [contact@siamclmt.com](mailto:contact@siamclmt.com)

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# PRE- FACE



Welcome to “In-flight Catering Management,” a comprehensive exploration of the intricate world, provides understanding in culinary services to air travelers. This book highlights the multifaceted dimensions of in-flight catering management encompassing its history, operational intricacies, safety protocols, and emerging trends. The airline industry has significantly evolved since its inception, and it also has the realm of in-flight catering. From the humble beginnings of simple provisions to today’s sophisticated gourmet offerings, the journey of in-flight dining mirrors the advancements and innovations within the aviation sector itself. This book also embarks on a journey through time tracing the evolution of in-flight catering management from its nascent stages to its current state.

The first perspective to explore is the historical context of in-flight catering management. Presenting its origins and tracing its development over the years, valuable insights have been gaining into the forces that have shaped to become vital aspects of the aviation industry. From the early days of boxed lunches to present-day gourmet cuisine, understanding the historical trajectory provides a foundation for comprehending the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Next, the book delves into the intricacies of managing and operating in in-flight catering services – menu planning and procurement, and logistics and distribution. The efficient orchestration of these operations is essential for ensuring a seamless in-flight dining experience through a detailed analysis of best practices and case studies. These offer practical guidance in optimizing the management and operation in in-flight catering services.

Safety and hygiene management constitutes another critical perspective in the exploration. The heightened focus on health and sanitation in the wake of global events ensures that the safety and hygiene of in-flight catering operations has never been more crucial. This examines that the stringent protocols and regulatory framework govern food safety in aviation, and tools needed to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene.

Finally, this book turns our attention to the innovative trends and emerges issues that shape the future of in-flight catering management. From sustainable sourcing and digitalization to personalized dining experiences and cultural fusion, the landscape of in-flight catering has continually been evolving.

In conclusion, “In-flight Catering Management” is intended to be as a comprehensive resource for industry practitioners, academics, and anyone interesting in the fascinating world of aviation catering. Whether you are a seasoned professional seeking to enhance your skills or a newcomer looking to gain a deeper understanding in the field, I hope this book serves as a valuable guide on your journey through the skies.

**Bon appétit and safe travels!**

**Dr. Sanhakot Vithayaporn**

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Additionally, I extend my sincerest appreciation to all individuals who provided permission for the usage of their photographs, which have enhanced the visual appeal and educational value of this work. I am also grateful to those who provided insightful and crucial information for this book.

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**Dr. Sanhakot Vithayaporn**

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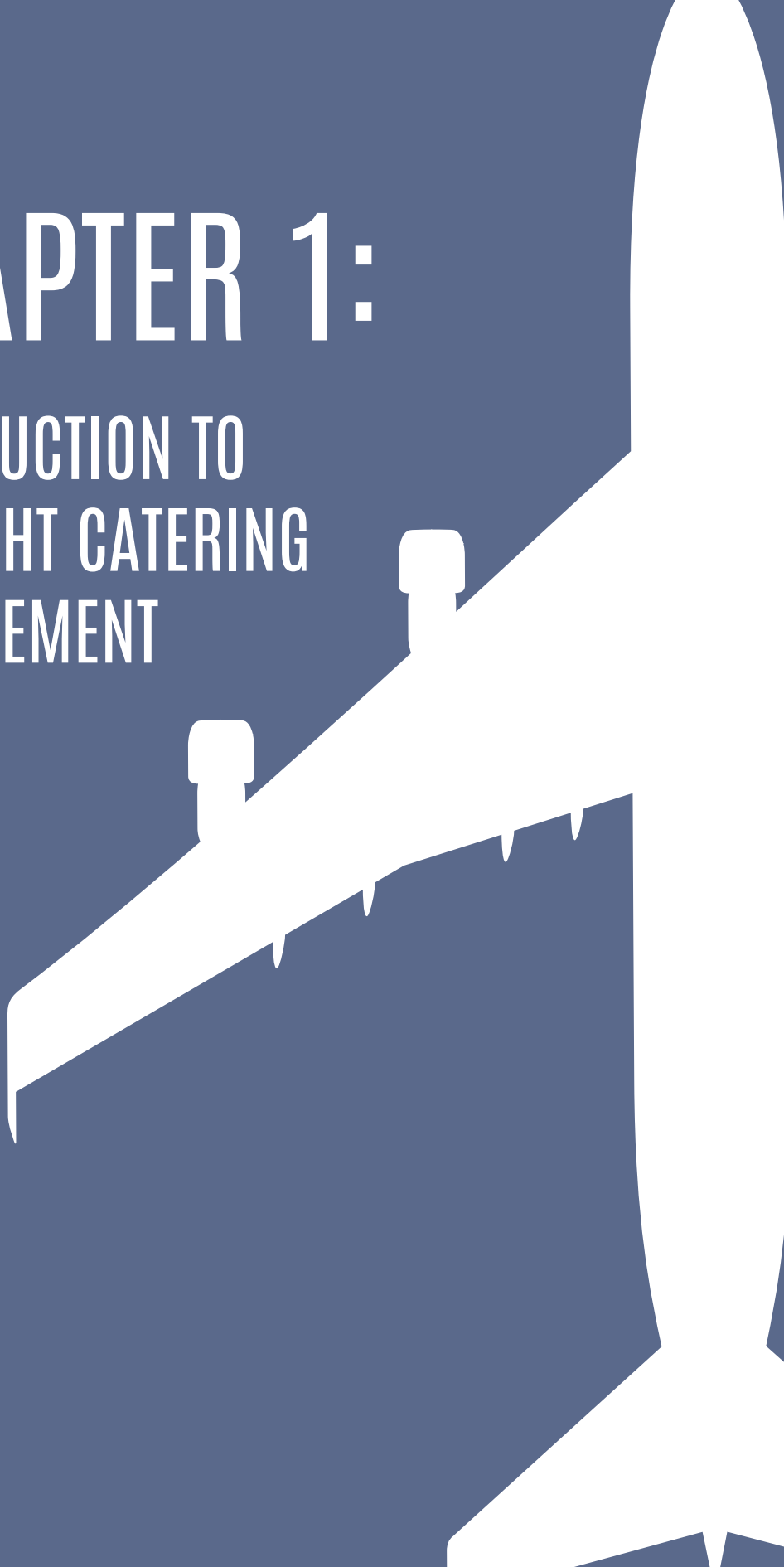
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# CHAPTER 1:

## INTRODUCTION TO IN-FLIGHT CATERING MANAGEMENT





## INTRODUCTION

This chapter embarks on a journey through the captivating realm of in-flight catering management which explores its rich history, evolution, and the diverse array of services encompassed. The inception of catering has specialized application within the aviation industry into the intricacies of in-flight catering with a particular focus on its management based on the context of Thailand.

This chapter consists of these following topics: 1.1 History of catering as a practice trace roots back to ancient civilizations where hospitality and communal dining are integral aspects of social gatherings. 1.2 The emergence of catering services presents the modern catering services which can be attributed to the industrial revolution and the subsequent urbanization. This leads to a shift in dining patterns and the rise of formalized dining establishments. 1.3 Types of catering services encompass a wide range of specialties which cater to various occasions, settings, and dietary preferences. The aviation industry's catering takes on a unique dimension catering to the specific needs and constraints of in-flight dining including space limitations, shelf-life considerations, and altitude-induced taste alterations. 1.4 In-flight catering management entails the meticulous coordination of logistics, culinary operations, and quality control to ensure a seamless dining experience for passengers boarding on an aircraft. And 1.5 In-flight catering companies in Thailand boasts a thriving in-flight catering industry which caters to both domestic and international flights. From renowned catering companies servicing major airlines to boutique providers specializing in servicing the niche cuisines, the landscape of in-flight catering in Thailand is diverse and dynamic. Understanding the unique challenges and opportunities of the Thai market is essential for professional in-flight catering management which seeks for exceling this dynamic industry.

The subsequent chapter will explore deeper into the intricacies of in-flight catering management and evaluation of in-flight catering management.





## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Gain knowledge of overall catering industry including airline catering management
2. Understand the types of overall catering industry including airline catering management
3. Understand the catering service management for airline
4. Identify the business perspectives of airline caterer company in Thailand
5. Discuss the changing business trend of caterer company in Thailand

### 1.1 History of catering

The practice of catering has roots dating back to ancient civilizations, notably in Greek and Roman societies (Al Balushi, 2020). This section will briefly explore the historical evolution of catering in Britain, shedding light on the nature of the catering business and highlighting key principles that are shared across all catering operations. From ancient times through the early 19th century, there was a growing need for hospitality services, primarily due to the emergence of railways, which transformed the way people traveled. Trains became a primary mode of transportation during the early 19th century, preceding the pioneering developments in the aviation industry in 1909. This shift gave rise to the establishment of grand Railway Hotels. The introduction of railways, coupled with the advent of motorcars, significantly expanded the number of individuals who could access seaside destinations, capitalizing on the therapeutic benefits of coastal regions. Consequently, seaside hotels and boarding houses began to spring up at various suitable locations (De Jong et al., 2019).

As the 19th century drew to a close, there was a notable proliferation of clubs, large hotels, and select independent restaurants offering dining-out

experiences. These establishments were characterized by their high-class, sophisticated offerings, albeit at a premium cost, and they enjoyed growing popularity. This surge in the trend of dining out represented a pivotal development in the catering industry, as it relied on importing expertise and culinary traditions from the continent. Please remember to attribute the original source appropriately when using this information in your work (Gielen et al., 2012). The history of catering dates back to ancient civilizations, where offering food and hospitality to guests was an important cultural practice. As mentioned by Chang (2006), here is a brief overview of the history of catering:

- **Ancient Civilizations:** The practice of catering can be traced back to ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, where wealthy individuals and rulers would host lavish banquets for important guests. These events served both as displays of wealth and power, and as opportunities for diplomacy and negotiation.
- **Medieval Feasts:** In medieval Europe, feasts and banquets were common among nobility and royalty. Large quantities of food were prepared for these elaborate events, which often included roasted meats, fruits, and wine.
- **Guilds and Taverns:** During the Middle Ages, guilds, and trade associations in Europe established catering as a service for their members' events. Taverns and inns also provided catering services for travelers and locals.
- **Renaissance and Baroque Eras:** In the Renaissance and Baroque periods, banquets and feasts continued to be popular among the upper class. The French court, in particular, played a significant role in the development of modern catering practices.
- **19th Century:** As societies industrialized, urban centers grew, and the demand for catering services increased. Catering businesses emerged to serve private events, weddings, and social gatherings.





- **20th Century:** In the 20th century, catering evolved into a more organized and professional industry. Catering companies offered diverse menus and services to accommodate a wide range of events, from corporate functions to private parties.
- **Modern Catering:** With advancements in transportation, storage, and food preservation technologies, catering expanded its reach and became accessible to a broader audience. Today, catering services are available for various occasions, including weddings, conferences, corporate events, and more.
- **Culinary Diversification:** As the culinary world expanded, catering menus diversified to cater to different dietary preferences, cultural tastes, and dietary restrictions.
- **Eco-Friendly and Sustainable Practices:** In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on eco-friendly and sustainable catering practices, with a focus on using locally sourced, organic ingredients and reducing food waste.
- **Technology and Online Platforms:** The digital age has also transformed the catering industry. Online platforms allow customers to browse menus, place orders, and customize catering services with ease.

Today, catering remains an integral part of various events and celebrations, offering convenience, quality food, and professional services to individuals and businesses alike.

## **1.2 The emergence of catering services**

Catering services refer to the business of providing food, beverages, and related services at a designated location or event (Hallab, 2016). Catering companies or individuals who offer these services are responsible for preparing, delivering, and serving food to a specified group of people. Catering can encompass a wide range of occasions and settings, such

as weddings, corporate events, parties, conferences, and more. Catering services typically include not only the preparation and presentation of food but also aspects like menu planning, staffing, equipment rental, and often the arrangement of tables, chairs, and décor to create a complete dining experience. Catering services can be highly flexible, ranging from simple drop-off services, where food is delivered to the event location and set up for self-service, to full-service catering, where catering staff are responsible for everything from food preparation and serving to clean-up. The specific offerings and styles of catering services can vary widely, and they can be customized to meet the unique needs and preferences of each client or event.

Catering is the practice of offering food services in a remote setting, such as at hospitals, hotels, cruise ships, and special events like weddings. Specifically, wedding catering services provide food and beverages for wedding parties and can be a part of a comprehensive wedding package or hired independently. The history of significant catering services in the United States dates back to 1778 when Caesar Clamshell catered a ball in Philadelphia to celebrate the departure of British General William Howe. The catering industry gained a foothold in Philadelphia around 1820, primarily through the establishment of businesses founded by African Americans. These ventures proved profitable and garnered respect within the community. Robert Bogle is credited with being the pioneer of catering, and under his influence, the industry began to professionalize (Han, 2020).

Johan and Jones (2008) stated that the term “caterer” became commonly used in the 1880s as local directories started listing numerous catering businesses. The Soviet Union, in the 1930s, introduced state public catering establishments with simplified menus, and catering became the norm during World War II when rationing systems were implemented. Post-World War II, many entrepreneurs turned catering to sustain their businesses in the aftermath of the war. By the 1960s, dining in public catering establishments had surpassed eating at home.



Catering services may vary from one provider to another, but, generally, they are responsible for supplying food and the necessary equipment for serving it, such as utensils, ladles, tongs, and more. Some venues might also provide items like silverware, plates, and napkins, but caterers can supply them if needed. So, what distinguishes a good catering service? Achieving the status of a well-regarded wedding catering service provider is a challenging feat. A good catering service prides itself on hard work, determination, honesty, comprehensive training, discipline, and honed skills. Moreover, certain traits set apart a quality catering service.

In summary, the difference between food & beverage (F&B) and catering provide the underlying aspects of using the term of food and beverage, and catering in appropriate context (Jones, 2007; Jones et al., 2012).

## Scopes

- **Food & Beverage (F&B):** This term encompasses all aspects of food and drink service within various establishments, such as restaurants, cafes, bars, hotels, and other hospitality venues. It includes the preparation, presentation, and service of food and beverages to customers.

- **Catering:** Catering specifically refers to the business of providing and serving food and drinks at off-site locations or events. Catering services may cover a range of events, including weddings, parties, conferences, and corporate functions.

## Business model

- **Food & Beverage (F&B):** F&B establishments operate as permanent or semi-permanent businesses, and customers come to their premises for meals and drinks. The revenue is generated through on-site dining experiences.

- **Catering:** Catering businesses are often hired for specific events, and their revenue comes from providing services at those events. They may offer a variety of services, including menu planning, food preparation, delivery, and on-site service.

## Service style

- **Food & Beverage (F&B):** F&B services are typically designed for immediate consumption on-site. This includes table service, self-service, or a combination of both, depending on the type of establishment.
- **Catering:** Catering services involve preparing and delivering food to an event venue, where it is served to guests. The service style can vary, ranging from buffet setups to plated meals, depending on the client's preferences and the nature of the event.

## Target audience

**Food & Beverage (F&B):** F&B establishments cater to a local or visit clientele who choose to dine at the establishment. The focus is on providing a satisfying dining experience.

**Catering:** Catering services target clients hosting events and functions. The emphasis is on meeting the specific food and beverage needs of these events, which can vary widely in size and nature.

While both Food & Beverage and catering involve the provision of food and beverages, the key distinctions lie in the location, business model, service style, and target audience. Food & Beverage encompasses a wide range of on-site dining establishments, while catering specifically involves providing food services at off-site events.

## 1.3 Types of catering

Catering is food and beverage. The activity of providing and serving food and drinks at all kind of premises such as parties, meetings, hotel, event, function, home, school, restaurant, cruise and in-flight (Kim, 2014).

The business of providing food service at a remote site or a site such as a hotel, hospital, pub, aircraft, cruise ship, park, filming site or studio, entertainment site, or event venue. Basically, the catering is provided for seat back and standing catering depends on the type of event (Randy and Peter Catering Event Center and International Catering Association, n.d.).



### Type of catering

- Social event catering
- Mobile catering
- Corporate catering
- Wedding catering
- In-flight catering for airline industry

### Social Event Catering

The concept of “Drop-off catering” is a widely recognized term, referring to caterers who exclusively supply food for various events. This can range from appealing trays for casual gatherings, elegant boxed lunches for business meetings, to pre-prepared desserts supplied on a contract basis for restaurants. The food is meticulously prepared and packaged in the catering kitchen, with any last-minute details such as reheating, plating, garnishing, as well as service and clean-up, handled by others. It is important to note that the drop-off service can often be a highly profitable segment for a comprehensive catering company.

Another popular category in social event catering is “hot buffet catering.” In this approach, caterers offer hot dishes that are transported from their commissaries in insulated containers, ready for setup and immediate service. They may also offer the option of providing serving staff at an additional cost.

For a more comprehensive experience, “full-service catering” goes beyond simply supplying food. In this category, caterers often prepare food on-site to order, and they also provide event personnel, along with all the necessary culinary equipment such as china, glassware, flatware, tables, chairs, tents, and more. Full-service caterers can even arrange additional event services, such as decor and music. Essentially, a full-service caterer can oversee the entire event, not just the food component.

Special event catering typically caters to significant occasions like large-scale parties, receptions, anniversaries, and notable weddings. If you are in search of a catering service for your wedding, this type of service is ideally suited for your needs. Special event catering encompasses not only the provision of food but also various aspects of event planning. While some caterers specialize exclusively in certain event types, others offer comprehensive event planning services (Randy and Peter Catering Event Center, n.d.).

**Figure 1:** Food Lineup at the Social Event



Source: photo by Freepik.com

## Mobile Catering

A mobile caterer is a food service provider that offers food directly from a specialized vehicle or cart designed for this purpose. Mobile catering is a common sight at outdoor events, such as concerts, as well as in workplace areas and downtown business districts, often targeting office



workers in need of a quick lunch. A food cart, essentially a motorless trailer, can be transported by various means, including automobiles, bicycles, or by hand, to its point of sale, typically on public sidewalks or in parks. These carts are equipped with on-board heating and/or refrigeration systems to maintain food at the appropriate temperature for immediate consumption.

A catering truck, on the other hand, enables vendors to reach a larger market and serves a higher volume of customers while offering a similar service. Catering trucks carry a stock of prepared foods that customers can purchase. An example of catering trucks often seen are ice cream vans, which are common in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Food trucks, also referred to as mobile kitchens, are modified vans equipped with built-in cooking equipment like barbecue grills and deep fryers. This setup allows for a more flexible menu, as vendors can prepare food to order and have fresh items readily available. Vendors have the choice of parking their food truck at a fixed location, similar to a cart, or they can opt to expand their business reach by traveling to various customer locations. Examples of mobile kitchens include taco trucks found predominantly on the west coast of the United States, particularly in Southern California, and fish and chips vans in the United Kingdom. These types of vehicles are occasionally informally referred to as "roach coaches" or "ptomaine wagons."

**Types of vehicles** are as follows:

**Street Cart:** A street cart, also known as a food cart, is a non-motorized trailer typically moved by hand, bicycle, or automobile. These carts are commonly found on public sidewalks and in parks. They are equipped with on-board heating devices or refrigeration to keep food ready for immediate consumption. The range of food and beverages offered by street carts includes items like tacos, hotdogs, sausages, Mexican dishes such as burritos, frozen treats like ice cream, pastries like doughnuts, sandwiches, bagels, and Halal food options, including chicken or lamb served over rice.

**Food Truck:** Food trucks are mobile vehicles designed to carry a stock of pre-prepared foods, allowing vendors to serve a larger volume of customers. A well-known example of food trucks includes ice cream vans.

**Mobile Kitchen:** Mobile kitchens are typically large, modified vans equipped with built-in cooking equipment like grills and deep fryers. Vendors can prepare food inside the van, offering more flexibility in menu options. Examples of mobile kitchens include fish and chips vans in the United Kingdom and taco trucks in the United States.

**Concession Trailer:** Similar to a mobile kitchen, a concession trailer is equipped with food preparation equipment but lacks self-propulsion. These trailers are well-suited for use at long-lasting events, such as funfairs.

Mobile catering services play a crucial role in providing food to people in the aftermath of natural disasters or in areas where infrastructure has been severely damaged or destroyed.

**Figure 2:** Mobile Catering



Source: International Catering Association





## Corporate Catering

Business caterers specialize in providing food services for corporate events, which may include meetings, luncheons, training sessions, conferences, and corporate gatherings. This catering segment is characterized by high demand, although competition in the market can be quite challenging. Typically, office parties are scheduled in the evening, after standard office hours. In these cases, the menu often features lighter fare, consisting of snacks and beverages. Beverage options can range from tea and coffee to soft drinks or alcoholic beverages, depending on the timing of the event, especially for evening office parties.

On occasion, office groups may opt for a lunch gathering. Such events could serve as a farewell to a departing colleague or as a treat for visiting business executives from other locations. These lunches typically involve selecting dishes from a menu, allowing attendees to choose from a variety of cuisines, including both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. For those dining at our OJ Japanese Restaurant, the option of Bento Box lunches is available for the entire group.

In the context of award ceremonies held at Evora Bangalore, everyone in attendance is considered a winner. The menu for gala dinners is characterized by its elegance and high-end offerings, making it a suitable choice for business executives and companies seeking to create a favorable impression.

Food is often anticipated and deemed essential for most corporate gatherings. This presents a favorable opportunity for organization to enjoy a meal together serves as potent means to cultivate solidarity and nurture bonds among team members, partners, and customers. It allows individuals to relax and engage with one another on a more intimate level. Leading corporate strategically utilizes communal meals as a tool for team building, going beyond mere provision. These highly successful enterprises leverage corporate lunch catering services to facilitate regular opportunities for their employees. Food is a requisite aspect of every corporate function, and opting for catering services is widely regarded as the most convenient, premium, and professional approach.

**Figure 3:** Corporate Catering

Source: Randy and Peter Catering Event Center

### Wedding Catering

A wedding stands as one of the most significant events in an individual's life. Catering for a wedding is far from a casual undertaking; it demands meticulous attention to detail and timing. Clear and effective communication is essential not only with the bride and groom but also with other vendors involved, such as the DJ and photographer. Before taking on any wedding catering assignments, it is crucial to fully comprehend the complexities involved.

The strict etiquette once associated with hosting wedding receptions has evolved. Modern brides are just as likely to desire a unique wedding menu, which may include tasting stations, as they are to opt for a traditional sit-down meal. Naturally, as the caterer, your menu should have certain



guidelines. You cannot include every item from your regular dining room menu in your catering offerings, as some dishes may not withstand the extended periods that catered food often requires. Your wedding catering menu can range from simple to elaborate, depending on your preferences and capabilities.

**Figure 4:** Wedding Catering



Source: Randy and Peter Catering Event Center

When determining the pricing for a catered wedding menu, it is essential to do your research. Begin by investigating the rates that other local caterers and restaurants are charging for their catering services. This market analysis will provide valuable insights into competitive pricing and industry standards. Additionally, it is beneficial to explore the pricing of party platters and