

10

Prepare and serve areas for table service



Unit 606 Prepare and serve areas for table service

2FS1.1 Prepare service areas and equipment for table service

2FS1.2 Prepare customer and dining areas for table service

2FS1.3 Clear dining and service areas after table service

What do I need to do?

- Set up all the restaurant equipment.
- Set up tables for different types of service.
- Clear dining areas after service.

What do I need to know?

- Know and understand what the hazards are when preparing a restaurant.
- How to set up a table in preparation for different types of meal.
- How to clean and clear after table service.

Information covered in this chapter

- Preparing the restaurant or function room.
- Placing tables and chairs correctly.
- Setting tables.

KEY WORDS

Covers

The number of people at a table.

Still room

Area in a restaurant, normally, but not always, in the kitchen. The area is used to prepare bread items and hot beverages.

Waiter's stations

Sideboards within the restaurant that waiters use to prepare and store items for service.

Mise en place

French term for setting up the restaurant.

Table seating

The term used for an individual's cutlery and glasses on the table.

Tablecloths

The cloths used to cover a table.

INTRODUCTION

Setting up and breaking down a restaurant are as important activities as the actual service itself. Without setting up properly, the restaurant or food service establishment will not run correctly, will not meet hygiene or health and safety standards and will ultimately be a difficult place to work in.

To set up a restaurant first the room must be prepared, then the tables and chairs are set in place. After that the tables themselves are set up depending on the type of meal to be served and the style of restaurant. The other areas that need to be prepared are the waiter's stations and the still room.

After service has finished everything must be broken down and cleaned. This is important as the preparation for the next service will depend on everything being cleaned and ready to start again.

PREPARING THE RESTAURANT OR FUNCTION ROOM

Preparation is one of the most important tasks to be carried out in a restaurant. Ideally the entire room needs to be set up prior to each service. The preparation of a restaurant can also be referred to by the French term *Mise en place*, which can be shortened sometimes to MEP. The first task that needs to be carried out is to clean the entire room. This is either carried out by the waiters depending on the establishment, or there may be cleaners engaged to undertake this task.

✓ TIP

How a restaurant or food service establishment looks is vitally important to the whole operation as it is the first impression customers have.



IMAGE COURTESY OF WWW.ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/KAREN MASSIER

A formal table setting

Cleaning schedule

AREA	CLEANING NECESSARY
Walls	Any marks removed and walls dusted.
Window sills	Washed and polished.
Floors	Brushed prior to service, brushed and mopped at the end of service.
Waiter's stations	All contents removed at least once a day, all areas washed.
Doors	Main door washed, all door furniture polished.
Ledges	Dusted.
Chairs	Soft seats vacuumed and all other parts washed and polished.
Windows and mirrors	Polished and any smears removed.
Tables	Washed and sanitized.

Putting tables and chairs into place

How tables and chairs are set out in a restaurant is very dependent on the style of establishment and the type of menu being served. As a general rule the more expensive and higher-class the restaurant the more space that the customers can enjoy.

**TIP**

Check each table and chair for cleanliness or damage. Also ensure that there is no chewing gum stuck to the bottom of the tables or chairs.

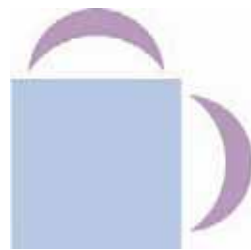
In a Michelin-starred restaurant each table has space around it both for the waiters to work and for the customers to enjoy the comfort. The tables will be large and the chairs will be luxurious. In a brasserie-style restaurant there is less space around and between the tables, the tables will be smaller and the chairs less luxurious. In a mid-range chain restaurant the tables will be close together and the chairs will be functional, comfortable and easy to clean.

When setting out tables and chairs, there are a few basic guidelines to follow:

CHECKLIST

- ✓ Ensure that waiters are able to pass between the chairs without knocking into any of them.
- ✓ The tables should be spaced evenly around the room and not crammed into one end.
- ✓ The correct amount of chairs should be at each table, i.e. a table for four persons should have four chairs. Even if only three customers sit at the table it is always easier to reduce the amount of covers than increase them.
- ✓ Do not place tables of two near large groups as the smaller tables may not be able to hear what is being said at their table.
- ✓ Be aware of what guests may be able to see from each chair. Try and ensure that no-one is staring straight into the kitchen or bathroom.
- ✓ Try and space customers evenly around the table so they all may hear and see each other.
- ✓ Do not cram customers on to too small a table. They will be cramped and may not enjoy their meal.
- ✓ If customers are seated at too big a table they may feel 'lost' at it.

There are many different ways of placing seats around tables. It can impact on how customers enjoy their meal. The figure below shows two different methods of seating a table of two. The diagram on the right is an example of a formal setting where the customers may be having a business lunch. The diagram on the left is an example of a more informal setting where perhaps two friends may be enjoying a meal.

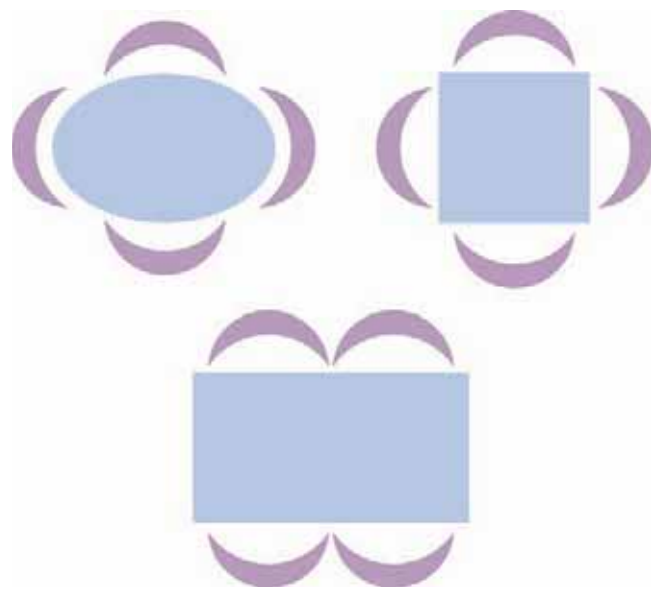


(a) Informal setting



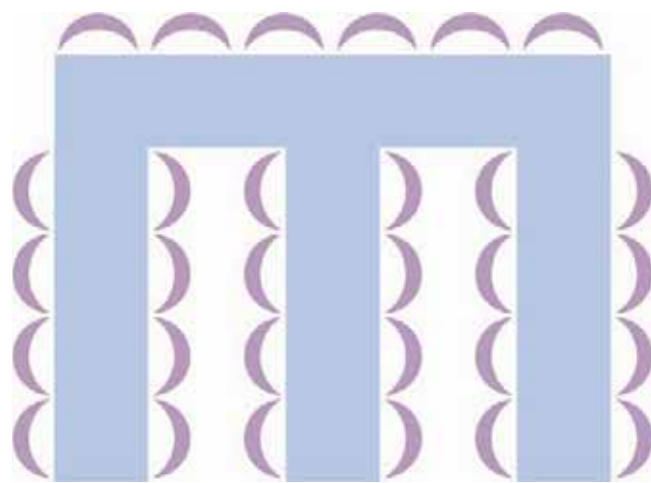
(b) Formal setting

This figure shows different layouts for tables of four people. All layouts are dependent on the size and type of tables available. The top two are preferable as all the customers are spaced equally but this is dependent on the size of the tables.

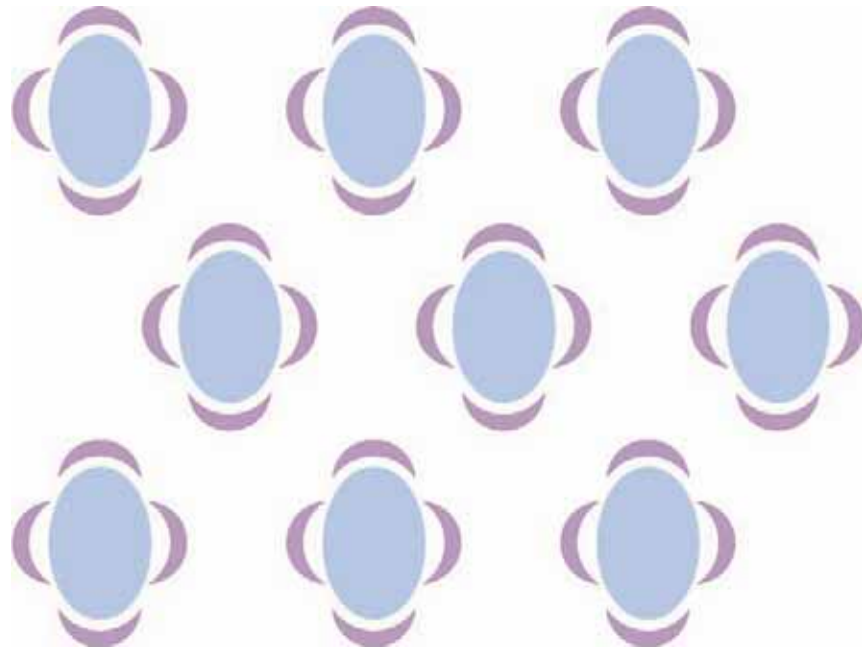


Layouts for tables seating four people

The following figures show layouts for different styles of function. They can be used for different purposes of function. The figure below shows a top table with sprigs, which is frequently used at wedding breakfasts. The figure on the following page shows the more modern selection of round tables for a function.



Top table with sprigs



Layout using round tables for a function



ACTIVITY

- Draw a plan of your restaurant and state on each table how many customers can be seated at that table.
- Where would you seat a table of 15 persons?
- How would you accommodate 16 tables for two on Valentine's night?

Clothing up tables

Once tables are in the correct place they should next have their tablecloths put on. This is referred to as clothing up. See step-by-step on page 131 at end of chapter

There are certain rules that must be followed with tablecloths:

- Tablecloths should be handled as little as possible.
- When tablecloths are laundered they are folded and starched to ensure that they look good on the table.
- When they come from the laundry tablecloths should be folded in a concertina fold.
- When folded each size of tablecloth will be easily identifiable.
- The main crease on a tablecloth should run down the middle of the table.
- If a tablecloth is damaged or dirty it must be discarded immediately.
- Tablecloths should cover the legs of the table.



TIP

Tablecloths should not have marks or tears. Send any marked or damaged cloths back to the laundry.



IMAGE COURTESY OF WWW.ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/HAL BERGMAN

An a la carte set up

- Tablecloths should hang evenly on all sides.
- Tablecloths should never touch the floor.

Tablecloths must be stored carefully to ensure that they do not get damaged or dirty.

SETTING TABLES

Tables must be in place before they are set, so that once the cutlery is set on the table it is not moved or knocked out of place.

Chairs need to be set into place. If the table is clothed chairs should just touch the cloth, not be pushed in fully.

It is important that each table is consistently laid up. With all tableware laid correctly service will not be impeded because a customer does not have the correct cutlery or is missing an item of tableware.

Napkins



IMAGE COURTESY OF WWW.ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/JACK JELLY

A lily napkin fold

Napkins can be made of many different materials including cotton and linen, or they can be disposable. Whichever napkin fold is to be used (see different step-by-step napkin folds) they must all be the same size, shape and height. Napkins should be handled as little as possible.

If the napkin is to be in the centre of the place setting then it should be placed on the table first. All napkins should be positioned in the same place on each setting. If a napkin is dirty or damaged it must be discarded.



ACTIVITY

Refer to the step-by-step sections on napkin folding. Choose three different folds and practise folding them. Ensure that each time you fold a napkin it is the same size and shape. Check that you do not handle the napkins too much.



IMAGE COURTESY OF WWW.STOCKPHOTO.COM/JACK JELLY

A waterlily napkin fold



A fan napkin

Cutlery

Cutlery must be polished prior to being laid on the table (see Chapter 8 polishing crockery and cutlery).

When cutlery is carried around the room it must be placed on a service plate, tray or held in a cloth. In some restaurants and establishments the waiters wear white gloves to set the tables to avoid getting finger marks on the cutlery.

When main-course cutlery is placed on the table it should be equidistant across the customer's place setting. There should be space for plates to be set down without moving the cutlery.

There are two main cutlery settings, 'a la carte' and 'table d'hôte'. For an a la carte setting each customer is given the same cutlery, generally a main-course knife and fork. Other cutlery is added depending on the customer's orders. The table d'hôte setting is one where the menu is set and all the cutlery can be placed on the table before the customers arrive.

In general, main-course cutlery is set first then each preceding course is laid outside it. The forks are on the left-hand side of the customer and the knives and soup spoon on the right. The side plate and butter knife are beyond the forks.

To ensure a consistent lay up each piece of cutlery should be the same space from the edge of the table. They should not be at the edge of the table as the customers could knock them off the table as they sit down.

Glasses

Glasses are polished and checked for fingerprints or watermarks. In an a la carte service a simple wine glass may be placed at each setting. At a function there may be different wines or drinks served with each course. The glasses for these may all be placed beside each setting.



Clean glasses



TIP

Only lift cutlery by their handles. Do not ever hold on to the other ends as these have to go into the customers' mouths.

Cruets

These are a vital part of any table setting. They should be full at all times, especially if they are glass and visible. They must be polished before being set down. Cruets should be set in the same place on each table.

Decorations

Table decorations can be very elaborate, for example at a wedding or function large flower arrangements may be placed in the centre of each table. Alternatively they could be very simple, perhaps a single flower stem or ornament. Either way they must be fresh, clean and appropriate for the meal. They should also not impinge on the diner's plates and customers should be able to see across the table to one another.

CHECKING TABLES

Once the room is set every table must be checked and the room as a whole must be looked at.

In particular look for:

Missing table items: each table must be inspected to ensure that nothing is missing.

Tables and chairs in correct position: this will prevent them having to be moved during service.

Debris on the floor: always brush the floor prior to each service.



TIP

Checking the room after setting up is vitally important. It will ensure that the service runs smoothly.

PREPARING STATIONS AND STILL ROOMS

Waiters' stations are placed around restaurants and function rooms. Their purpose is to hold equipment that the waiters may need during service. They must be filled prior to service and kept restocked during service

ITEMS THAT SHOULD BE IN WAITERS' STATIONS

✓ Cutlery	✓ Glasses
✓ Spare place settings	✓ Toothpicks
✓ Service plates	✓ Menus
✓ Trays	✓ Sugar bowls
✓ Clean napkins	✓ Ice buckets
✓ Crumbing plate	✓ Tablecloths

The still room is an area between the restaurant and kitchen that is used to prepare items that are needed for the restaurant. Traditionally this area was used to prepare bread, butter, tea and coffee, but over time its purpose has expanded and it can provide finger bowls and other accompaniments for

service. During service cutlery is polished in the still room and is sent to the floor to refill the waiters' stations.

Within the still room the following equipment may be present:

- *Refrigerators*: Temperature should be checked and recorded prior to service.
- *Coffee machines*: Should be switched on and all equipment checked.
- *Hot water still*: Should be switched on.
- *Grill or small oven to heat bread*: Should be switched on.
- *Coffee and tea pots*: Restocked and polished ready for service.
- *Sugar bowls and milk jugs*: Polished and filled in preparation for service.
- *Bread baskets and butter dishes*: Bread baskets should have clean napkins placed in them and butter should be cut to the correct size.
- *Bread knife and board*: Located and put in place.
- *Equipment for polishing cutlery*: Vinegar, jugs and a good supply of freshly laundered tea towels should be prepared.
- *Salt and pepper cruets*: Filled and have spares ready.
- *Sauces*: Prepared and put into fridge.

Prior to each service the following items may need to be requisitioned from the stores. The amounts will depend on how many customers are expected.

Items that need be ordered in each day:

- Milk
- Butter
- Sauces
- Bread or rolls
- Lemons

CLEARING AND TIDYING A RESTAURANT AFTER SERVICE

AREA	ACTION
Tables and chairs	Once all customers have left the establishment all tables should be cleared of settings. The chairs should all be placed on top of the tables.
Floors	Should be brushed and mopped.
Waiters' stations	Should be cleared down and washed.
Crockery and cutlery	Should all be washed up and as much as possible polished.
Glasses	Should be washed up and as many as possible polished.
Debris, empty bottles	Should be placed into bins.
Dirty napkins and tablecloths	Should be counted and bagged to be sent to the laundry.

STEP-BY-STEP: NAPKIN FOLDING – THE CONE

1 Take a clean, freshly laundered napkin. Fold the napkin in half to form a rectangle



2 Pick up one corner of the napkin and wrap the entire napkin around your hand



3 Fold the end point back on itself



4 Open the napkin to stand up

STEP-BY-STEP: NAPKIN FOLDING – THE BISHOP’S MITRE



1 Take a clean, freshly laundered napkin



2 Fold one corner up



3 Fold the other corner down



4 Fold the entire napkin in half



5 Bring the ends together and tuck under one another



6 Pull out into the final shape

STEP-BY-STEP: NAPKIN FOLDING – THE LILY

1 Take a clean, freshly laundered napkin



2 Fold in half into a triangle



3 Bring both points of the triangle up to the centre point



4 Then fold the top fold back in half again



5 Fold a small edge up



6 Turn the napkin over

7 Tuck one end into the other



8 Set upright and tuck the leaves into the band

9 Final result

STEP-BY-STEP: NAPKIN FOLDING – THE WATERLILY



1 Take a clean, freshly laundered napkin



2 Fold each corner into the centre



3 Repeat once again



4 Turn the entire napkin over and fold each corner into the centre again



5 Place a glass in the centre of the napkin



6 Pull out the edges from under the napkin



7 This fold can either be used on a plate by itself or in a bowl or basket

STEP-BY-STEP: NAPKIN FOLDING – THE FAN

1 Take a clean, freshly laundered napkin



2 Fold in half to form a rectangle



3 Starting at one end concertina the napkin



4 Fold the whole napkin in half



5 Set upright and tuck the remainder underneath itself to balance it



**STEP-BY-STEP: NAPKIN FOLDING – THE WAVE**

1 Do not unfold a freshly laundered napkin



2 Open each end once



3 Roll each end into the centre twice



4 Crease the outside fold



5 Turn the napkin over and fold back on itself

STEP-BY-STEP: NAPKIN FOLDING – THE PRINCE OF WALES FEATHERS

1 Take a clean, freshly laundered napkin



2 Fold one point up to about 5 cm below the other point



3 Bring the left hand corner up to beside the lowest point



4 Fold the second edge up to beside the lowest point



5 Fold the bottom half of the napkin up to the lowest points



6 Flip the bottom half back on itself



7 Turn the napkin over



8 Tuck the ends in



9 Bring the points down



10 Final result



STEP-BY-STEP: CLOTHING A TABLE



1 Use the correct size of cloth for the table



2 Open cloth across the table, so that the large fold is at the top



3 Lift the large fold with your thumb and forefinger



4 Lift the next edge of the cloth with your little finger. Flick the other edge slowly across the table



5 Once the far edge is in place release your thumb and forefinger and pull the other edge into place



6 Check that the cloth is undamaged and unmarked and that the main crease is running in the correct direction

Assessment of knowledge and understanding

You have now learned about the responsibilities for planning and setting tables. This will enable you to ensure your own positive actions contribute effectively towards the whole team.

To test your level of knowledge and understanding, answer the following short questions. These will help to prepare you for your summative (final) assessment.

Preparing for assessment checklist

- Write a list of all the different duties that need to be completed to set up your establishment.

Project 1

- 1 Write a step-by-step list of how a table of two covers, three covers and four covers is set in your establishment for restaurant service.

Draw a diagram of the waiter's station, list all the items that need to be set up in preparation for a restaurant service.

- 2 Why does everything need to be cleaned out of the waiter's station at the end of each service?

- 3 Why is it important that the floor be kept clean and free of debris before, during and after service?

Project 2

- 1 A function of 25 people are booked into your establishment this evening for a birthday dinner. The menu has been agreed. Draw a table plan of how you would organize the room.
- 2 Design a table for the above function. Which cutlery and settings would you use? Don't forget to include table decorations.

Mary's Birthday Dinner

Potted Shrimps

*Beef Wellington with
roasted potatoes and a
selection of vegetables*

Crème Brulee



INDUSTRY PROFILE

Name: RICHARD HARDEN

Position: CO-PUBLISHER

Establishment: HARDEN'S LIMITED

Current job role and main responsibilities:

Co-publisher, with brother Peter, of Harden's London and UK restaurant guides. Main jobs – general management, survey analysis, restaurant reviewing, website editing, guidebook writing.

What is the most exciting thing about working at Harden's?

For better or worse, we are the only UK business which does what we do the way that we do it.

When did you realize that you wanted to pursue a career in the food service industry?

I didn't, it's an accident really. And I'm really a publisher/journalist – the link with food service is almost incidental.

Training:

Qualified as barrister.

Experience:

With brother Peter, pioneered concept in UK of basing restaurant reviews on user-generated content (USG).

What do you find rewarding about your job?

It has been fascinating to track, and in a tiny way contribute to, the development of the restaurant business over nearly 20 years.

What do you find the most challenging about the job?

The media environment is economically very challenging for operators of all sizes, and we are a very small operator.

What advice would you give to students just beginning their career?

Go and eat out, as real customers, at the best places you can afford. You'll learn nothing if you go along to your mates' restaurants, even if it is cheaper/free, as the experience is not authentic.

Who is your mentor or main inspiration?

We were inspired to believe that there might be scope in the market for survey-driven restaurant guides by the success of the Zagat guides in the US, and the Marcellino's guides in Germany.

What traits do you consider essential for anyone entering a career in the food and drink sector?

I don't think you can generalize.

A brief personal profile

I qualified as a barrister and worked in the City of London for eight years before setting up Harden's, with my brother Peter, in 1991.

Can you give one essential management tip or piece of industry advice?

Remember the customer.

