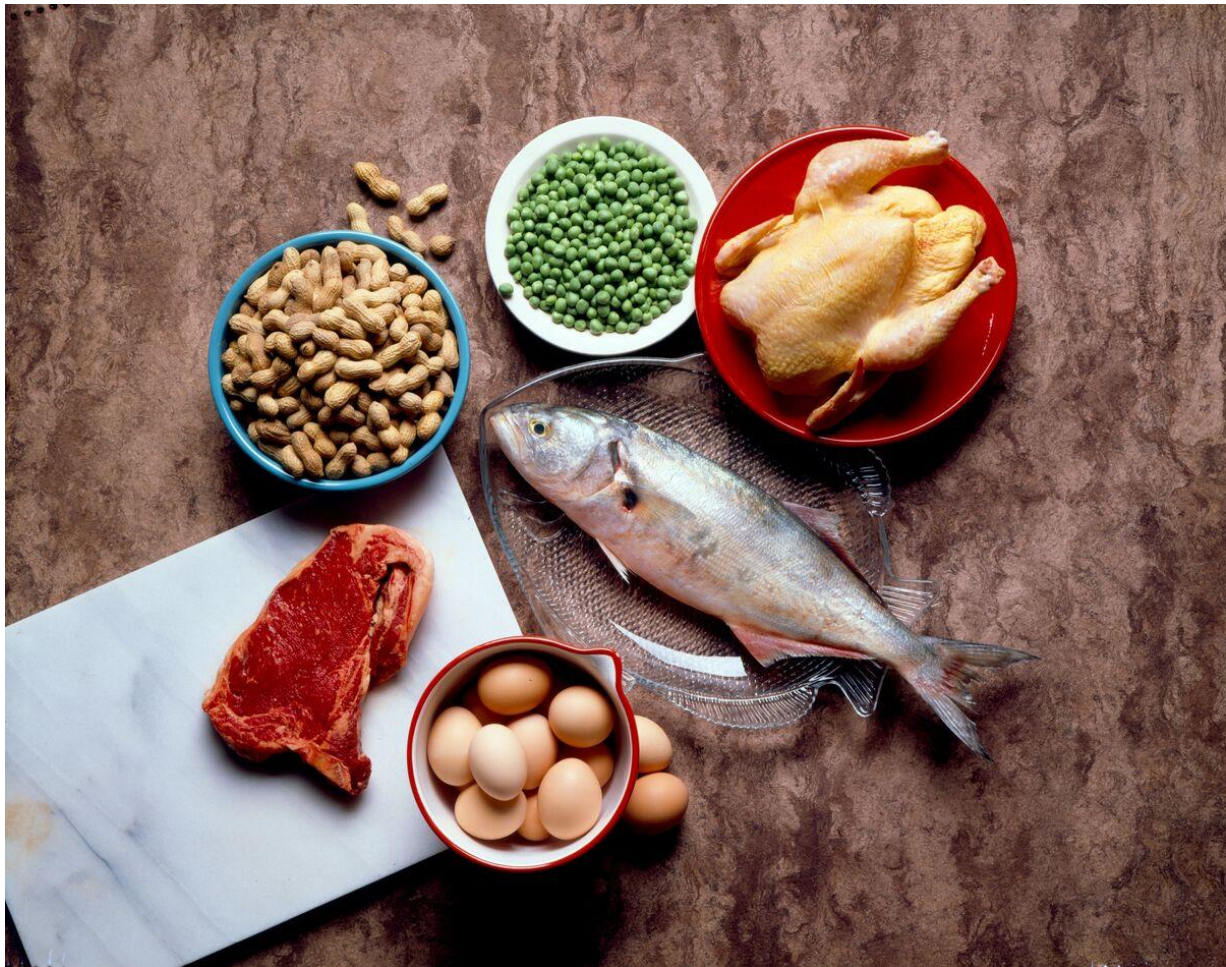




Source: Brown, 2023.

Reflective Portfolio

BMGM 4004 Restaurant Management

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TASK 1. Formal dining experience for eight people in an a la carte restaurant.

Formal dining is an elegant experience where there is a multiple course (at least four) menu filled with chef's culinary delicacies and the finest wines, all served on a table setting of fine porcelains, silver cutlery, sparkling crystal and spotless linens (Etiquette Scholar, no date). Formal dining is an opportunity for both the chef and the guest to impress each other with their refined taste for fine food (Bartolone, 2020).

Cambridge Dictionary (2024) states that à la carte means 'choosing separate foods in a restaurant rather than having a complete meal'. In the restaurant, the furnishings are sophisticated and high-quality, usually including antiques, with artwork hanging from the walls, and the servers are handling fewer tables so that they spend more time attending to client's needs and attention (The English Kitchen, 2022).

To ensure the table of eight guests is going to be satisfied, the kitchen needs to be prepared, by having all the ingredients for the dishes are already prepped. Most of the prepping is done with the chef's knife and a variety of other speciality prepping instruments, although some kitchens may use other tools such as food processors, blenders or hand mixers (The Caterer, 2010).

A lunch service for a table of eight people will begin with the setting of tableware: plate in the middle; to the left, the forks, working from inside-out, the salad fork, followed by dinner fork and lastly the fish fork; if there is no fish, then the dinner fork is the closest to the plate, followed by the salad fork; and on the right there is the dinner, fish, soup spoon and tea spoon from inside out, the knife being placed with the blade facing the plate; on the far right side of the plate, glasses will be placed, the big one for the water, the middle sized glass for red wine and the smallest for white wine; the desert fork and spoon are placed at the top of the plate (BNG Hotel Management Institute, no date; Food Pocket Guide, no date).

Upon the guests' arrival, within two minutes of their seating, they need to be greeted with a smile and a welcoming positive posture to introduce the restaurant

and yourself, to let them know you will take care of them. Furthermore, the server needs to take a drinks order after suggesting cocktails, which need to be served after four to six minutes after ordering. Next, the food menus need to be presented along with describing the special of the day, afterwards the wine list needs to be introduced (BNG Hotel Management Institute, no date).

The following steps to take is taking orders from the table and sending them back to the kitchen with the food assigned to each seating and ask about the wine they prefer; then the bread and butter needs to be placed on the table and the wine needs to be presented and served. Next, the appetizers are to be delivered to the table six to eight minutes after the order is done, and when they are served on the table, guests need to be asked for a refill of drinks. If the guests have taken two bites from the appetizers, the server needs to check-in with them to ensure all is to their liking; if not, the server expressly needs to notify the manager about the fact that one or more of the customers are dissatisfied with the food. All the guests must finish eating before servers can begin clearing the plates, never reaching above the guest, but taking the plate from the closest point. Main course follows, the server needing to assure all guests have proper and clean silverware. Serving the main course and asking to refill drinks after delivering it to the table. The server needs to remain vigilant and in proximity of the guests to assess if they deem everything tasty and well prepared, again, taking action if a customer is unhappy. After the guests finish their meal, the server clears the plates, the silverware and condiments. Next, dessert and coffee is suggested, the server needing to prepare the correct silverware for the order and bring sugar to the table if it is ordered, making sure coffee or tea is served quickly, and the dessert is served no more than six minutes after ordering. Again, the guests are asked if all is to their liking, removing any empty coffee or teacups from the table. Once the dessert is finished, remove plates and everything else from the table. The server suggests a digestive or if the diners have any other wishes. If they require nothing else, then the waiter brings the check immediately, and promptly takes the payment. Of course, the waiter then thanks his guests with a warm and smiley attitude and welcomes them back.

Such sophisticated and elegant experience as dining in an a la carte restaurant may have its appeal. However, having a fine-dining experience may lead to more food waste. A study comparing casual restaurants versus fine-dining

restaurants, found that food waste amounts were smaller in the casual restaurants than those in a la carte restaurants, attributing this to the casual, relaxed atmosphere where staff is friendlier and more empathetic, as opposed to the more formal attitudes in the fine-dining establishments (Tahir, et al., 2022).

For a long period of time, the French haute-cuisine was recognized to be at the top world's fine-dining, but within the early years of the twenty first century, the Michelin organization predicted a change in consumers culinary preferences and an expansion towards more exotic tastes from world's cuisines. For that matter, the Michelin Guide remains an authority on taste-making and recognized by the world's greatest chefs (Lane, 2013).

Task 2. Seafood platter: description, cooking style, serving style and skills required.

Seafood has been a gastronomical preference for a long time, all over the world. There are however some downsides to serving seafood platters. One is that many restaurants make the mistake of cooking everything together or in the same way when in fact different seafoods require different coating or need to be cooked at different temperatures or periods of times (Fitzmorris, 2018). Another negative aspect to seafood platter could be that because it is served as a platter to more than one person, the number of pieces of shellfish or prawns for instance can not be quantified most of the times, and the customers might consider the food insufficient (Fabricant, 1999).

A customer has ordered a seafood platter for two people and has asked it to contain lobster. The other items the platter could contain are mussels, prawns, calamari and some seaweed. For a mediterranean twist, calamari would be grilled and paired with a lemon and herb dipping sauce, anchovies would be added, along with some tzatziki sauce (NC Seafood Restaurant, 2023).

The platter would be served hot. The lobster is boiled in a large pot and tongs are necessary to handle it and avoid burns or scalds. The lobster is then sliced in two, the tail meat is taken out and portioned into even slices and then placed back into the lobster, for easier access to the lobster meat (Colchester Oyster Fishery, no date).

The mussels would be washed to remove any dirt and to remove the beards. Mussels would then be added to a hot pan to fry, when prior to that chopped onion with chili flakes, garlic cloves were fried in a mix of butter and olive oil. Prawns can be steamed or fried. Small sweet, peeled prawns could be a better choice because they are easy to eat and make little mess, whereas shelled prawns need to be peeled by the customers. If going with the second choice, the guests need to receive extra bowls for all those shells. Calamari can be deep fried. The seafood would be served on a large platter topped with tempura deep fried red grapes.

The cutlery needed to be placed on the table for seafood are lobster crackers for the guests to get to the meat inside the lobster shell, seafood forks which are special forks that allow for scooping up the meat inside shells, a rolling pin to gently push out the meat from the legs, adding sufficient towels and napkins and perhaps wet wipes as the seafood is messy to eat (Lobster Anywhere, no date).

The guests may ask questions too. For instance, they might ask what parts of the lobster are edible and which are not, to which the response is that most of the lobster is safe to eat, but to advise that the green looking substance called the tomalley as it might contain toxins. They could also ask how to reach the meat from the lobster's legs, and that is either using the rolling pin or gently roll the legs between hands and pull the meat out. A lobster pick can also be used to reach meat in the lobster's legs or claws.

In conclusion, a seafood platter is a meal easy to cook and to assemble and is likely to satisfy customers with its vibrant colors and nutritional values.

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