

PUBLIC HOUSE CATERING

Public house catering is something which has developed suddenly and rapidly over the past few years. Now many of the large breweries are planning rapid expansion programs to give training to all grades of staff in their houses with particular emphasis on the catering services to be provided.

The 'Pub' or 'House' may be managed in two ways.

1. By the tenant who buys himself in, the sum involved being according to the size and contents of the establishment concerned. The tenant then buys the breweries beer, sells it and retains a certain percentage of the profit.

2. A brewery can employ a manager to take care of all operations both food and drink, and pay him a salary. The number of pubs or houses incorporating restaurants providing a full meal, rather than the accepted snacks and sandwiches has more than trebled over the past few years. Here equal thought is given to the catering service and the drink service. The reasons for this sudden development is that the public are eating out as a habit rather than a luxury and they do not mind spending that little extra for quality, quantity and service in the right price range. The luncheon voucher trade is something not to be overlooked and if menu's are within this range then the houses will benefit by attracting this market. In most cases food as food is not provided to help increase drink sales, but often no drink would be sold if food service was not provided. Food and drink naturally go together.

One of the major problems is staff. To retain staff you must show interest in them and get them interested in the job. This is done by providing training both on and off the job. Two main factors are taken into account here:

1. The standard which the trainee has already attained, and
2. His specific training requirements according to the job.

Three types of courses are offered and cover each area of the licensed trade from cellar management, bar service to catering. They are as follows:

- a) A basic training for new entrants to the licensed trade.
- b) An upgrading course for those with limited experience.
- c) A refresher course for the more experienced in order that they may attain certain standards.

The general approach in all pubs and houses seems to be a standard menu with only a variation in dishes according to locality or the speciality of the tenant or manager. Other features such as decor, tableware, and furnishing vary from house to house, to give each its own atmosphere. Great emphasis is put on the use of convenience foods and pre-prepared foods. A number of pubs have installed micro-wave ovens, which are used to heat, in seconds, pre-prepared and plated dishes which come straight from the refrigerator as ordered. The meals themselves can be served in the plastic ovenware that they are stored and heated in. Perhaps a disadvantage of the micro-wave is that the 'through-put' or 'turnover' of dishes is not very fast, especially at peak periods. Secondly the micro-wave does not color and therefore it has to be used in conjunction with a high speed grill.

The following is a guide to the range of dishes which might be found on various pubs or house menus:

1. English Beef with Yorkshire Pudding, Horseradish Sauce.
2. Gammon Steak poached in Cider.
3. Beef Casserole flavored with Ale.
4. Galway Oysters.
5. Irish Stew.
6. Shepherds Pie.

7. Faggots.
8. Sausages.
9. Hot Dogs.
10. Hamburger.
11. Steak & Kidney Pie.
12. Steak & Mushroom Pie.
13. Apple Pie.
14. Braised Steak.
15. Salad Counter : Assorted. Have as much as you wish within price of meal.
16. Egg & Bacon Pie.
17. Curried Beef & Rice.
18. Home made Pate.
19. Grills.
20. Lobsters.
21. Salmon.
22. Jugged Hare Pie.
23. Cheese Board.
24. Gaelic Coffee.

There are obviously problems in production, not so much in the newly built house where proper catering facilities are incorporated, but in the old established public houses which were not originally equipped to cope with food production. What sells the food is presentation over the counter, together with ample portions at competitive prices. Today's manager or tenant has at his command a wide range of equipment and specially prepared food dishes which are all aimed at use in public house catering. He must make use of these facilities in order to progress. At the same time speed of service and turnover of custom is very important in order to fully utilize all equipment and space provided for catering. The types of equipment used vary from pub to pub and house to house. Some of that are listed below:

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| 1. Deep Freeze | 2. Refrigerator | 3. Bain Marie |
| 4. Grill | 5. Gas Oven | 6. Heated Display Unit |
| 7. Deep Fat Frying | 8. Mini-Chef Unit | 9. Salamander |
| 10. Micro-wave | 11. Infra-red Grill | 12. Cona Coffee Machine |

Undoubtedly Public House catering, is here to stay. The method of service however is bound to change over the years. Automatic vending machines for the dispensing of beers, spirits, and minerals will soon be coming on the market. Can this take over the present day methods of drink service and perhaps form a unit with the Micro-vend Buffet thus giving us the complete service through coin operated machines of alcoholic beverages and hot & cold snacks? This may be a thought for the future especially if we bear in mind the problems of staffing for 7 days a week, of the range of hours that a house is open, split shift, and the fact that wages are bound to rise. This of course is not the complete answer but could be part of it. The house of the future will also provide much more entertainment in the form of dancing, music, coin operated machines, and will be the meeting place for the house wife over coffee and a snack.

This could mean a pub or house would be virtually open from morning till late at night, with a larger team of staff being required on a two shift system.