5 Food production

Aim

To highlight the importance of sound menu planning and emphasise its role in the planning, implementation and management of food production systems.

Objectives

This chapter is intended to support you in:

- Exploring cuisine and restaurant styles
- Identifying types of menus and the classic menu sequence
- Planning menus
- Identifying key influences on menus
- Managing food production as an operating system
- Managing volume within food production systems
- Developing and managing the purchasing function
- Developing and applying operational control procedures.
5.1 Cuisine and restaurant styles

Over the past few years a number of terms have been adopted to signify differing types of food and establishment styles. Examples of these are given in Table 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cuisine or restaurant style</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bistro</strong></td>
<td>Often a smaller establishment, with check tablecloths, bentwood chairs, cluttered decor and friendly informal staff. Tends to offer honest, and robust cooking styles.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brasserie</strong></td>
<td>Generally a largish, styled room, with a long bar, normally serving a range of meals. Often it is possible just to have a drink, coffee or just a snack. Service by waiters, often in traditional style of long aprons and black waistcoats.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cafeteria</strong></td>
<td>Primarily self-service with customer choosing selection from a counter or counters in varying designs and layouts. Originally developed for the industrial feeding market but now seen in a variety of commercial sectors.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fine dining</strong></td>
<td>Classical style of cooking evolved through many centuries. Greater depth of flavour. Style does not necessarily mean the most expensive ingredients. Classical presentation of food with full table service. Good quality tableware is generally an important feature in the dining experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coffee shop</strong></td>
<td>Similar to brasserie-style operations, often themed. May be open all day and serve all meal types from breakfast through to supper.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Country house hotel cooking</strong></td>
<td>Varies from establishment to establishment but food is often modern British style with some influence from classic or even farmhouse style. Often the home of high-end destination restaurants.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Farmhouse cooking</strong></td>
<td>Simply cooked with generous portions of basic, home-produced fare using good, local ingredients.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>First class restaurant</strong></td>
<td>Tend to be formal fine dining restaurants with classical preparation and presentation of food and offering a high level of table service. Often associated with classical/haute cuisine.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fusion/eclectic cuisine</strong></td>
<td>Based on an inter-mix of cuisine cultures, for example a fusion of particular western and eastern styles. Also described as eclectic cuisine. Can often be based on mixing a variety of apparently random ingredients. Most successful when the approach is based on one main traditional cuisine principles.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health food and vegetarian restaurants</strong></td>
<td>Increasing specialisation of operations into vegetarianism and/or health foods (though vegetarian food is not necessarily ‘healthy’), to meet lifestyle needs as well as dietary requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>International destination restaurant</strong></td>
<td>Often Michelin-starred fine dining restaurants, offering a distinctive personality, cuisine, ambiance, beverages and service. Usually table service at various levels but mostly personal and highly attentive. Generally considered as the home of gastronomy. Expensive but also high value.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethnic cuisine
Indian, Oriental, Asian, Spanish, Greek, Italian, English, French, Creole and Cajun are just some of the many types of cuisine available, with establishments tending to reflect specific ethnic origins. Many of the standard dishes are now appearing within a range of other menu types.

Molecular gastronomy
Term sometimes used to describe the greater combination of food with science using many of the technical advances in equipment and ingredients, in order to reflect the combination of the social, artistic and technical aspects of food and beverages.

New wave brasserie (gastrodome)
Slick modern interior design, coupled with similar approaches to contemporary cuisine and service. Busy and bustling and often large and multi-leveled.

New/modern British/French
Cuisine drawn from the classical style but with new style saucing and the better aspects of nouvelle presentation. Plated in the kitchen, allowing the chef the final responsibility for presentation.

Pop-ups
Restaurant operations that appear for one day or for several months. Can be established restaurant operations in a different location or new talent showing off their skills without long term financial risks. Cuisines vary. Heavily reliant on social media for success.

Popular catering
Often now referred to as casual dining. Variety of styles of operation with all-day (grazing) menus. Mostly plated table service.

Public houses/Gastropubs
Licensed environment primarily for drinking alcoholic beverages. May be simply a serving bar with standing room for customers or may have more plush surroundings incorporating the offer of a variety of foods. These can range from simple plated dishes through to establishments offering full restaurant service (sometimes called gastro pubs).

Restaurant
Term used to cover a wide variety of operations. Price, level and type of service, decor, styles, cuisines and degree of choice varies enormously across the range of types of operation. Service ranges from full table service to assisted service such as in carvery-style operations.

Street food
Specialising in a variety of local and international food offerings, often cooked at the market stall. Found in night-time markets, night bazaars, or souvenir and food markets, and also markets with a number of other similar titles, including Christmas markets.

Takeaways and fast food outlets
Providing ‘grab and go’ service (some have seating areas). Includes kiosks, takeaways and quick service outlets, sandwich shops, branded coffee outlets and modern-day burger, chicken and fish concepts, as well as providing a variety of international foods. Often also called quick service restaurants.

Themed restaurant
Often international in orientation, for example, Icelandic hot rock with food prepared and cooked at the table, ‘Beni-hana’ oriental theme, again with food prepared and cooked at table. Also includes themes such as jungle, rainforest, or music/operas where waiting staff will perform as well as serve.

Wine bars
Often offering a mixture of bar and brasserie-style operation, commonly wine themed, serving a variety of foods.
5.2 Types of menus

Menus may be divided into two main classes, traditionally called à la carte (from the card) and table d’hôte (table of the host). The key difference between these two is that the à la carte menu has dishes separately priced, whereas the table d’hôte menu has an inclusive price either for the whole meal or for a specified number of courses, for example, any two or any four courses. There are, however, usually choices within each course.

All menus, no matter how simple or complex, are based on the two basic menu classes of table d’hôte or à la carte. Some menus also offer combinations of these two classes, with a number of menu items being offered together at a set price and other menu items being priced separately.

Sometimes the term menu du jour is sometimes used instead of the term table d’hôte menu. Another menu term used is carte du jour (literally ‘card of the day’), or ‘menu of the day’, which can also be a fixed meal with one or more courses for a set price. A prix fixe (fixed price) menu is similar. A ‘tasting menu’ (‘menu degustation’) is a set meal with a range of courses (often between six and ten). These tasting menus are offered in restaurants where the chef provides a sample of the range of dishes available on the main menu. These tasting menus can also be offered with a flight (selection) of wines (sometimes this can be a different wine for each course). For all menus the price of the meal might also include wine or other drinks.

In addition to menus for main meals, such as luncheon or dinner, there are also requirements for other types of menu such as floor/room service menus, lounge service menus, hospital tray service menus, airline tray service menus and rail service menus and event menus.

Classic menu sequence

At the end of the 19th century, France, and later other countries, had adopted the style of service known as service à la russe. In this system, the courses in a meal are served one after the other. Previously there had been a style of service known as service à la française where meals consisted of two courses, each made up of a variety of dishes, anything from 10 to 40 in number. The first set of dishes were placed on the table before the diners entered – hence the word entrée – and, when consumed, these dishes were removed or relieved by another set of dishes – hence the words relevé or ‘removes’ (see the classic menu sequence below).

Over the last 100 or so years the sequence of the European menu had taken on a classical format or order of dishes. This format is used to layout menus as well as to indicate the order of the various courses. Although the actual number of courses on a menu, and dishes within each course, will depend on the size and class of the establishment, most follow the classic sequence. This sequence is given in Table 5.2.