

Contract & Payment FAQ's

Some of our most frequently asked contract and payment questions

WHAT IT SAYS

WHAT IT MEANS

4.3 Guaranteed Catering Minimum: Expected Adult Guest Count section 4.1 is locked in at the time of contract signing. Vendor meals or Kids' Meals do not count toward the adult guest count. Actual Adult Guest Count must actualize at **80%** of the Expected Adult Guest Count; otherwise, client is responsible for paying the difference.

For example- 80% of a 100-guest count would be 80 guests.

Once we get closer to the wedding, we will ask for final guest count. This just means that your minimum number of guests cannot fall below 80% of your guest count at time of contract.

If your count is under that 80%; we can figure out a way to reallocate your money and make menu changes like upgrades and additions.

5.1 Menu will be fixed, and no changes may be made, except by Caterer, **(21) twenty-one days before Event**. Caterer shall have the ability to substitute items based upon availability and or increased price for said selected item.

We don't need a finalized menu before contracting. Contracting will lock in your date- not your menu. We have some to get that menu perfect. Your final menu is due a month before your wedding day.

5.2 The Per Person Menu Cost in Section 3.1 is locked in at the time of signing the contract. While changes can be made to the food items listed on the contract, the price per person for food must not drop below the quoted amount per person under the food services section listed in 5.3 or Client shall reimburse Caterer the lost income from said new price per person for food as determined by Caterer.

This contract locks in your minimum per person pricing. Once the contract is signed, we will not go below that price per person.

But we can change and edit the menu up until 1 month before the big day!

6.1 Staffing

In contracting Mountain Laurel Catering & Events (the Caterer), the Client recognizes and understands the Caterer is a team of employees, managers, and owners. The Caterer cannot guarantee certain employees, managers, or owners will be present for the Client's event. All employees of the Caterer are trained properly to execute events.

We have an incredible execution team! While we cannot guarantee or promise that any specific staff will be onsite for your wedding day; know that we've prepped the crew extensively and are always in constant communication.

6.3 Plated Meals

Place Cards | Client agrees if having a plated meal where the guest is being served a pre-selected entrée option, the Client must provide a place card at each place setting to designate who will be eating what meal. For example, if John Doe orders Salmon, his place card would read "John Doe: Table 1 - Salmon" OR have a symbol or color code to designate the meal choice.

If you've chosen a plated meal with predetermined choice of entrée; you **MUST** provide place cards that designate each meal choice, as well as a full guest list meal breakdown organized by table number.

6.4 Escalation Clause

The menu, rental, linen, bar, bartender & service pricing established in this Agreement under Section 3.1 by the Caterer is quoted based on the current market pricing. Pricing escalation can occur. Caterer reserves the right to adjust the price of menu/rental/linen/bar/bartender/service items experiencing escalation of cost OR will offer a recommendation of replacement for the menu item. Such adjustments or replacements will be stated in writing before issuance of an adjusted proposal and with full disclosure to all parties. The Caterer agrees to provide information regarding increased food costing as soon as they are aware.

When pricing out your menu, we use current market prices and our vendors current rates.

If these costs significantly increase once we get closer to execution day, we may have to look closer at your menu and bar provisions.

Cost fluctuation is more likely to effect seafood and meat; but supply chain issue can affect anything. We'll always be transparent with you and work **with** you to find a solution and offer comparable recommendations.

Please note we typically place orders for all your wedding food needs about a week before wedding day to guarantee freshness and eliminate the need for freezing product.

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6.8 Rentals

The Client acknowledges Rental Fees for China, Flatware, Glassware and Linens are all based on Base Pricing. Customization and Special Requests will affect the quoted cost, either by increasing or decreasing. The Caterer will quote these requests as needed and issue an adjusted cost to the Client. For Clients with Linen Packages: consider this cost per person as a holding cost, dependent on what type of tables you use (farm tables versus regular banquet tables), guest count, etc. The Linen Cost per person is subject to change due to customization.

Your rental costs are not finalized until **we** have placed your rentals and have received a quote back from our rental partners. Depending on your style selections and event logistics: this price can fluctuate. We use a standard per person price in our proposals to act as a placeholder for those basic packages.

6.10 Venue Access

The Caterer requires access to the venue space no later than 2.5 hours prior to guests arriving or the start time of the event. In the case of a wedding, the Caterer requires 3 hours prior to the ceremony or the first event occurring onsite. For instance, if the ceremony is offsite, and cocktail hour is set to start at 4 p.m. at the venue, the Caterer requires access by 1 p.m. The Caterer also requires a minimum of 1-hour tear down time at the end of the event after guests have exited. Some events may require more tear down time and will be adjusted accordingly.

We need time to get ready to! As an offsite caterer we *LITERALLY* bring the whole kitchen. We need time to prepare and familiarize ourselves with that day's event. Whether it's a venue we're at every weekend or a private residence, the earlier the better; for all of us!

6.11 Room Flips

The Client acknowledges Room Flips take more staffing on the Caterer's part. In order to properly staff, the Caterer needs at minimum a 7 day notification for Room Flips. The flat rate for a room flip up to 150 guests is \$600, and for 150+ guests is \$1,200. This amount will be added as a line item to the total contract price. In the event of inclement weather and a non-anticipated Room Flip must occur, the Client recognizes the Caterer may not have the proper staffing to complete said Flip in a short, designated amount of time. The Caterer will act professionally and swiftly to complete the Room Flip in the shortest amount of time possible.

There are a few venues whose property layout may result in having to "flip" the room, most often from ceremony to reception during cocktail hour. If you're wedding plans include a flip- no prob! But please be sure to let us know so that we can provide adequate staff to get your flip done quickly.

6.12 Food Serve Timing

Cocktail Hour: The Caterer agrees to serve all cocktail hour food (both stationed and butlered) for a 60-minute time frame. Should the Client request an extended cocktail hour, the Caterer reserves the right to increase the Food Costs per person.

Dinner: The Caterer agrees to serve all buffet service for one hour OR until all guests have been served. If the event is a stationed meal service, all stations shall remain open for a maximum of 1.5 hours. If the Client would like to extend the time of the buffet or stations, the Caterer reserves the right to increase the Food Costs per person.

Your proposal has likely been costed out for a standard one-hour cocktail hour. Keep in mind when opting for an extended cocktail hour; that your per person pricing will go up as well. If cocktail hour extends, then our total service time, and food cost increase too. Additionally, buffets are open up to one hour, and stationed dinners for one and half hours.

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A few other things in your proposal/ contract to note:

Dessert Table Set Up - We completely understand if you decide to source your desserts elsewhere, and certainly don't mind helping serve them to your guests. Please note that there is a \$350 fee for us to set up your dessert table, or \$150 to set up a donut wall- as this takes additional labor on our end. (Does not apply to wedding cakes or sheet cakes.)

Because of the many moving pieces that come along with your wedding day; we require the couple use a professional **day of coordinator**. If you do not have one; we can provide this service at an additional cost or provide recommendations.

Timeline- we believe in cooking directly from heat to table; so, maintaining a timeline is extremely important to the quality of your food served. While we try our best to accommodate timing delays or holdups; a significant timing change (15+ minutes) on event day can cause food quality issues and we may not always be able to accommodate while keeping the integrity of our food top of mind.

If **not** using MLC'S bar service, please note there will be an additional fee for trash and recycling if we must remove it from the premise.

Payments

Deposits/Tasting Fee can be made via check, cash, or credit card. Subsequent Payments can be made via check or credit card. (We prefer check.)

When sending a check, please be sure to write the **Last Name of the Client and the event date** in the subject line; especially if the last name is different. Please also pay close attention that the written amount and numerical amount match up. Any bank fees associated with returned or declined payments will be passed on to the client.

If you'd like to pay with a credit card, we can send you an invoice; just ask! The 4% processing fee will be added on to all transactions.

Please Do NOT remit your **final payment** until all rentals are finalized and you are given your final payment amount from your contact person.

Gratuities:

Mountain Laurel Catering does NOT charge a mandatory gratuity fee. Gratuity is always appreciated but never expected. When we receive gratuities, they are split between our Site Leads, Servers, Bartenders, Sous Chefs, Bakers, Prep Cooks and Dishwashing Staff (a team of 20+---- it takes a village!)

Many couples ask our guidance on gratuity. If you would like to provide gratuity, we ask that the money or check be given in a sealed envelope (addressed to Mountain Laurel Catering care of Sarah Combs) to your coordinator, so you don't have to worry about it once the event is underway. Our recommended amount is 10-15% on your food & Bar Services total (for instance if your food and bar services of your proposal is \$10,000, the suggested tip would be \$1,000-\$1,500) This money will be split between all of the above staff who make wedding and event days possible. Again, gratuity is always at the discretion of our couples.