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## Decisions On Appetizers And Cocktail Hours

By "Amy K. Spade"

In order to have even more time to socialize or to give the married couple some time for pictures or quiet, the trend of cocktail hours has re-emerged. Of course, these aren't the only reasons that you may want to contemplate a little fun before the actual start of the reception.

For the wedding party

After the rush of pictures and the excitement of the ceremony, a lot of the wedding party can become disheveled and unkempt. By giving them a little time to get freshened up, all of the reception pictures can be just as lovely as the ceremony ones.

Of course, if the wedding party has to transport themselves to the reception hall, a cocktail hour can give them enough time to get there and get organized as well. They can put away anything that they brought with them to the hotel or to the ceremony, plus change into anything that they may have brought with them—more comfortable shoes, for example.

A cocktail hour is a great new way to have a receiving line. The wedding party can meet and greet the guests as they arrive at the reception hall, even show them to their seats if they'd like. This way, the only thing that anyone is waiting on is the bride and groom.

For out of town guests

If you just couldn't schedule the wedding and the reception back to back, then you may be in luck with having a cocktail hour. When your guests are from out of town, they don't necessarily want to go back to their hotels before heading over for the reception, so they can have the option of going for light

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appetizers and cocktails.

This also gives them the opportunity to mingle with everyone in a less intense setting. There won't be all the dancing and cake cutting, so it can be a lot calmer. Plus if the wedding was earlier, the guests are probably hungry, so you'll be feeding them as well. And drinks can help to liven up any bunch of people.

A cocktail hour is a great way to warm everyone up and get acquainted before the arrival of the couple and the start of the reception. And since you're feeding everyone a little something to begin with, you may also be able to have a less complicated dinner menu—if you're on a budget.

So if you're deciding on whether or not to have a cocktail hour, why not just do it? It's an inexpensive way to keep your guests from having grumbling stomachs.

Amy Spade is an expert on planning weddings, and she has written an amazing totally free minicourse on how to make sure that you have the day of your dreams, and avoid wedding day disaster! Get the free course "Your Special Day from Start to Finish" now at at

<http://www.weddingdata.com>

### **How To Use An Online Catering Service**

**By Lee Dobbins**

#### **How To Use An Online Catering Service by Lee Dobbins**

The next time you have a party, save yourself the time and trouble of agonizing over appetizers by buying all your hors d'oeuvres online. They'll think you hired an expensive caterer or spent weeks slaving over a hot stove!

Your munchies can make or break your party so you want to be sure that you have fabulous tasting foods. You can order sumptuous appetizers such as stuffed mushrooms, egg rolls, scallops in bacon, salmon pinwheels, coconut shrimp, artichoke and spinach tarts and more – all prepared by wonderful gourmet chefs. They'll arrive pre-cooked so all you have to do is pop them in the oven and cook. And the best part – you can get all this for around \$5.00 per guest!

Of course, ordering online can be a disaster if you don't know what to look for. Some tips for ordering food online include checking out the site credentials and making sure you know how to prepare the foods after they arrive.

When using an online food catering service, make sure their plant is USDA approved. This ensures that the meats are inspected by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service and are up to federal standards. Also, make sure they use grade A meats. You should be able to find this information on an "About Us" page or query them via email.

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You'll also want to order foods to arrive on the right day. It won't do much good to have 200 appetizers arrive the day after the party! Most online food catering services ship overnight so make sure you plan properly. Most appetizers will arrive frozen so you want to make sure that you are home to accept delivery so that you can get them into the freezer for proper storage before they thaw out.

Make sure you know how to properly prepare the appetizers so that you can plan your day appropriately. Since the food will be frozen be sure you read the instructions to know if and how they need to be thawed. In addition to thawing, you will get instructions on how to cook the appetizers and make sure you follow these precisely since if you don't your fabulous hors d'oeuvres could end up tasting like mush!

Lee Dobbins is a contributing writer for <http://www.online-gourmet-foods.com> where you can find more information on

gourmet foods and gifts

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