



CATERING “SERVICE CHARGE” EXPLAINED

It is the most commonly asked question-what DOES the service charge include? It doesn't always mean servers, which we know can be confusing. Most catering companies (and venues) have a lot of odds and ends that cost them money to make your event happen, and in turn, will apply a percentage to your event in order to cover those cost. In lieu of sending you a 4-page breakdown of every single item they are charging you for, the result is the *service charge* line on your invoice. Typically, this percentage ranges between 18-20%. Your service charge includes the following:

- **Serving Items**

This includes things like chafers to keep the food hot, large salad platters, bowls for dressings, large serving spoons and other items at the buffet line. We will use stands to elevate displayed food-not only does it look cool, but it is practical in making the most of the table's space. Passed hors d'oeuvres need something to be set on when they are moving around, such as platters and trays. All these extra items can really add up, so instead of listing every single spoon, tray, and pan we include them under the umbrella of the service charge.

- **Large Equipment & Delivery Vehicles**

When your food is prepped at the catering kitchen it still must travel to you and most times your event isn't around the corner. Large warmers/ovens and refrigerated trucks keep your food at the appropriate temperature, so it tastes just as fresh as it did the second it came out of the oven. This equipment requires purchasing and maintenance, just like your daily driver, our vans need gas and routine oil changes/maintenance. The service charge contributes to these costs, ensuring that we can afford to properly execute your event. No one wants to eat a wilted salad or an ice-cold entrée.

- **Behind the Scenes Staff**

Before your event, operations staff prep and load the vans with all the rentals and equipment needed to execute your event. They are loading dishes that were cleaned by dishwashers and food prepped by prep cooks. It takes 6-8 hours of pre-production before we can even arrive at your event. Before you, your family, co-workers or your wedding planner see us set foot at your venue, there have been at least 10 people already involved in the making of your event. Once the event is over, our staff unloads the equipment, sends the dishes, silverware, and glassware to the dishwasher area and it starts all over again the next day. Our staff members receive a wage just like any other job and the service charge contributes towards these pre and post event production costs.

So, there you have it, the mysterious *service charge* line in your quote or invoice explained. Every caterer may do things slightly different, so it never hurts to ask them about all they include in their catering quote. No matter what the case, there is A LOT that goes on behind the scenes of your event. We understand that you don't do this every day, and we expect questions so don't be afraid to ask!

Sincerely,
Tulla White & Team

