



Miss Tea's no fuss guide to your wedding catering and feeding a whole load of your friends and family.





Lovely homemade strawberry jam for a lovely couple!

[Introduction](#)

Hello! I've decided to put this guide together for you as I receive so many questions from couples who are not sure where to start with their wedding catering. So to ease your wedding food headaches I thought this maybe helpful.

[How much is it Miss Tea?](#)

THE question you all want to know the answer to. Having no set menus it is a tough one to answer with one single figure, however, below are a few of my past and current events with their prices per head*.

1/ A very lavish afternoon tea comprising of 16 entirely handmade savoury and sweet bakes £23.50 per head (100 guests).

2/ Three course sit down bespoke wedding breakfast with a choice of mains and desserts for 85 guests (£37.50 per head).

3/ Canapes on arrival (3 different handmade), a three course sit down wedding breakfast and midnight snacks for 85 guests (£50 per head).

4/ A 'Vegetarian keep it coming mezze' comprising of 20 different elements for 100 guests (£27 per head).

5/ A large Vegetarian summer picnic, an afternoon tea, then hot evening food for 120 (£45 per head).

*The price per head is for all the food and all of my time (my time meaning all cooking, all buying/sourcing, organising of hire equipment and staff). The prices do not include the hire equipment costs and do not include the staff hire costs, these are discussed later in this guide.

**Prices are based on 2012, there will be an increase for following years.

[Miss Tea, would you be happy to work with other caterers and just do part of our wedding?](#)

Of course, as long as you are clear from the outset. Sometimes it's nice to have a smaller role to play and have the pressure reduced. I worked on a wedding at Prussia Cove in 2011 and shared the catering with a hog roast company, I made strawberry jam and scones for the cream tea, made lots of lovely dips and ran the Vegetarian section. I'm working with another caterer this year where I am making the canapés, salads, bread and dessert – it's fine!



A gorgeous mackerel caught off rocks on St Marys, Isles of Scilly.

[Your venue and hiring kitchen bits in...](#)

Some venues have a very minimal kitchen, a kitchen that is off limits to external caterers, or no kitchen at all. So keeping this in mind when you look at your venue you need to determine whether:

A/ If the venue has a kitchen.

Is it suitable to cook for the amount of guests you have? Does it have the appropriate equipment?

For example, for around 80-100 guests for a sit down 3 course meal a brilliant kitchen would have 2 x 6 ring double ovens, plenty of prep and plating up space, 2 large sinks, a commercial fridge for food, a large bottle fridge, an icemaker, a large commercial dish washer, a large hot cupboard, a water boiler, and a mug so I can have a cup of tea after desserts have gone out. If they have their own stock of glasses, crockery and cutlery for your use – even better! Check that the use of all of the above is included in your venue hire cost?

B/ There is no kitchen!

No problem, we hire a catering tent along with the items we'd need to run your service. A basic tented kitchen would include the tent (this may come with your marquee), 1 or 2 x 6 burner ovens + fuel, 1 hot cupboard, 1 large fridge, 1 bottle fridge, tables for prep and plating. A general figure for a basic catering tent including power is around £1500 at cost – some caterers may add a commission to this.

Remember, the equipment needed will be driven by your menu choices. (See 'be creative - save money').

Another point to bear in mind is some venues prefer you to use a caterer on their preferred supplier list, so if you have found a caterer that you want to work with you'll need to inform them of this.

[Service ware \(crockery, glasses and cutlery\)](#)

Some caterers, including myself, work from home so are limited in the amount of commercial equipment they can house. So we hire it in. It is always useful to ask your caterer to quote separately for this part so you can see the price per item charge. For example, budget white chinaware, glasses and cutlery will be around 19p +vat at cost per item. So for a 3 course sit down meal you're looking at per person: Starter plate, main plate, dessert plate, starter cutlery, main cutlery, dessert cutlery, 1 champagne flute, 1 water tumbler, 1 wine glass = around £2.75 per head.

You'll need other items like water jugs, salt and pepper, table clothes... but rather than list them here (we'll be here for ever!) I have created an items hire list with prices which I am happy to send you.

Hire equipment, including staff comes with a 20% vat charge on top, I charge this to you at cost. The food cost contains my time for organising hire lists, deliveries and staff for you.



My favourite
wild apple tree...
somewhere in
Cornwall!

How many staff do I need?

This varies depending on what type of meal you are having. Usually for a sit down affair I would go on one waitress per table. For food which is set out on a food station we can get away with a lot less. So say, 100 people for a sit down meal with ten tables of 10, we'd need 10 waitresses. But, 100 people for a serve yourself meal from a food station we'd be ok with 5 waitresses.

Miss Tea is brilliant at multi tasking, but she always needs extra hands in the kitchen! When I am cooking for a wedding, I always bring one or two extra chefs with me, this is because I spend a lot of time somewhere in the middle of being a cook, organising the waitresses, overseeing front of house and the food that goes on plates. On average for 80 -100 guests (sit down meal) I'd need one extra chef and a commis chef to work with me on the day.

How much are the staff?

Waitresses are currently £9 +vat per head and they work on a 4 hour minimum shift. Chefs and commis chefs range from £12 - £13.50 per hour + vat and work on a minimum 6 hour shift. Again, my time for organising this is covered in the food cost.

Be creative – save money!

Menus: Be clever with your menu, lots of gorgeous options for many courses can be prepared in advance, infact things like stews, slow cooked meats, baked goods and some vegetable dishes improve over a day or so – so think, the more that can be prepared offsite, the less large equipment you'll need a caterer to hire in.

Hiring in service ware versus homemade: If you are up for a bit of graft and are going for a vintage tea

party theme, using a village hall, having a picnic or a serve yourself idea think creatively about what you can use to serve food on. For example, I'm using sanded planks and surf boards for serving salads on next summer! Think about yourselves and how things could fit in with your lifestyle, use collected jam jars for salad dressings on tables, raid charity shops for table clothes or buy end of rolls from fabric shops, car boots can be fab for finding cake stands, teapots or vintage china. You could even use roofing tiles to serve canapés, empty cable drums for cake tables – just start looking at objects differently.

Make sure your caterer has all the legal stuff:

Are they certified fit to prepare, store and transport food by a local authority Environmental Health Officer and registered as a food business with the local council?

Do they have public liability, product liability and employers liability which covers them for their premises and cooking at other venues?

Do they have an adequate first aid kit and do they have a nominated first aider?

I think that is everything covered...

If you've got to the end of this guide and feel that I haven't answered everything you need to know – email your question to sarah@misstea.co.uk and I will answer and add it to this guide, it's a work in progress!

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