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## Saving Big on Catering Costs for Your Wedding

Apr 2, 2010  Wedding Planning Institute

Wedding and event planner Nadia Digilov is back with Lovegevy's [Wedding Planning Institute](#) to share more of her excellent planning tips. Want to read more? See her first guest post: [Top 10 Wedding Trends for 2010](#).

### 10 Secrets to Feeding Guests without Eating Your Budget!

By Nadia Digilov

One of the biggest checks that you will cut on your wedding date will be on the cost of catering. Food and alcohol can really eat up your budget and typically accounts for roughly 40-50% of the overall wedding cost.

*Hard to believe, isn't it?*

To put this into perspective, think about going out for dinner: the cost of a medium size dinner for one at a major city such as New York is about \$30 per person with tax & tip and not including much alcohol (perhaps 1 glass of wine). If you take this number and multiply it by 200 people the total comes out 6,000. Not that scary yet? Well, take into account that most guests will have more than 1 glass of wine (more like 2 or 3), a cocktail hour and a full Viennese table for desert. This number now doubles!

Want to cut a few corners and still keep your guests full and fed? Below are the 10 ways to feed your guests without breaking your budget. Using just the right fusion of psychology, imagination and practicality, you will be able to impress your guests without spending a fortune.

Here are 10 secrets of a luxury wedding dining experience without spending a fortune:

- 1.) **Know your guests:** the first step to designing an quality and budget friendly budget is to know your people! What are their priorities? Are they more drinkers or eaters, or both? What is more important, a bar that will have a variety of top shelf alcohol or 5 entrée options during main course? Your answer to this question will drive the rest of the decisions that you will make.
- 2.) **Make a great first impression:** One of my mentors once told me "you have only one time to make a first impression." With experience I also realized that a first impression is really hard to break. A lesson in psychology for you: make a great first impression on your guests as soon as they arrive to your wedding! Set the tone with an immaculately dressed server greeting guests as they arrive to your wedding serving Champagne Bellini's at the door! This will set an environment where your guests will feel welcomed and comfortable at your wedding, or in other words, at this time you will need to begin breaking a first impression of comfort and joy which most of the time will be hard to do.
- 3.) **Cocktail hour:** If you are having a cocktail hour, consider having the servers hand pass the pricier items such as shrimps and scallops. This will typically save an average of 30% of your catering budget.
- 4.) **Not all seafood is priced equally:** Calamari are about half the price of shrimp, make your choices for cocktail hour and reception keeping this in mind. Ask your caterer a lot of questions!
- 5.) **Know your seasonal foods:** Some dining options are perfectly affordable during a summer season and are expensive during the fall and vice versa. Scarcity of a particular food will increase the cost by up to 40%.
- 6.) **Discount options:** If you will have children at the reception, choose the caterer that offers 1/2 price for children up to the age of 16. This will save tons of cash especially if you have a huge family.
- 7.) **Mix it up:** Depending on the evaluation of your guests, consider a tasting menu that will offer up to 8 mini courses for your guests.

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8.) **Mix up the alcohol brands:** Certain brands of vodka for example are pricier than others. Mix up expensive brands for guests that will inquire on brand and have your bar tender use the less expensive brands for guests that do not have a preference. This little trick will save you about 30% of the cost of alcohol.

9.) **Close the open bar an hour earlier:** Begin serving coffee and tea approximately 1 hour before you party will end. This will have tons of benefits by default. First, your guests will have a chance to sober up before leaving your party and second, it will save you up to 35%!

10.) **Fore-go the full Viennese table:** Go for a 5 tier over the top cake, with a chocolate fondue station and bite sized desserts that will be passed around. This will save you about \$15 per person and that's about \$3,000, a nice chunk of change that you can use towards your honeymoon or (depending on your area of residence) a few months rent on your new apartment!

***ABOUT NADIA DIGILOV & CELEBRATING IN STYLE:***

*Nadia Digilov is Manhattan's premier luxury wedding expert and the founder and CEO of NYC event production firm [Celebrating in Style](#). After seven years on the trading floors of the largest investment banks on Wall Street, her passion for production led her to begin creating luxury events that leave a lasting impression. Since 2002 Nadia has created weddings, corporate events, concerts, trade shows, and marketing events in major cities around the world including New York, Miami, Moscow, Tel Aviv and St. Petersburg.*

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

















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