

How Much Does It Cost to Cater Hors d'Oeuvres?

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Hosting an Event? Let's Talk About Hors d'Oeuvres Costs

Planning a wedding, reception, or corporate event in Utah? One of the first questions that comes to mind is: *How much will this cost per guest?* Food is often the centerpiece of any gathering, but [hors d'oeuvres catering](#) brings its own mix of excitement and challenges. If you're wondering whether hors d'oeuvres can fit into your budget while still making your event memorable, you're in the right place. This guide will walk you through average costs, what drives those costs up or down, and how to make the right choices for your guests and budget.

What we'll cover:

Average Cost to Cater Hors d'Oeuvres

When people search this topic, they want a number fast. So here it is: hors d'oeuvres catering typically ranges from \$10 to \$25 per person, depending on the menu, style of service, and guest count.

1. **Cocktail-Style Reception (lighter portions):** \$10–\$15 per person
2. **Wedding or Formal Event (full hors d'oeuvres spread):** \$15–\$25 per person
3. **Premium Add-Ons (seafood, carving stations, specialty displays):** \$25+ per person



Consider hors d'oeuvres catering as a scalable option. You can keep it budget-friendly with simple, crowd-pleasing bites or elevate it with gourmet [chef action stations](#).

Factors That Influence Pricing

Several factors influence where your event will fall on that spectrum.

1. **Menu Choices:** Cheese platters and bruschetta cost less than shrimp cocktails or carved meats.
2. **Guest Count:** Larger groups spread fixed costs (like setup and staff) across more people.
3. **Service Style:** Drop-off is cheaper. Passing trays and staffing stations are more costly.
4. **Event Timing:** Peak wedding season may result in increased pricing.
5. **Special Requests:** Dietary accommodations or themed menus may carry additional cost.

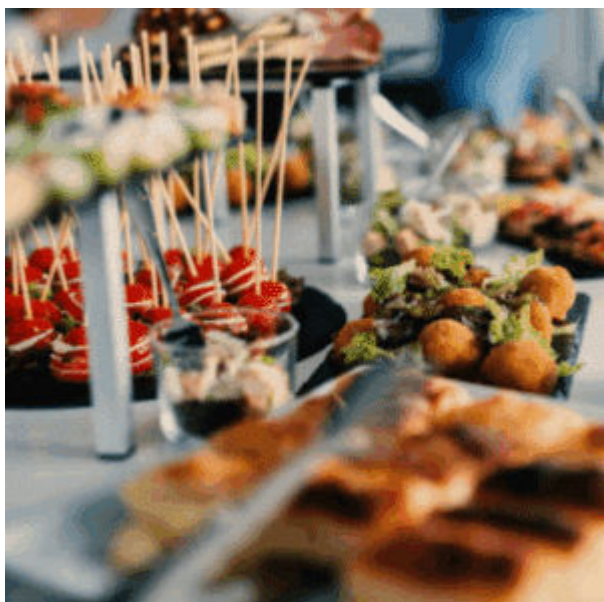


Here's the thing: pricing isn't just about the food. It's also about logistics, presentation, and the overall atmosphere you want to create for your guests.

Hors d'Oeuvres vs Full Meal Catering

Why choose hors d'oeuvres catering over a full meal?

1. **Flexibility:** Perfect for cocktail hours, open houses, or networking events.
2. **Budget Control:** Serving hors d'oeuvres instead of [plated dinners](#) can significantly reduce costs.
3. **Atmosphere:** Guests mingle more when they aren't tied to a table setting.



But keep in mind: hors d'oeuvres aren't always cheaper. If you plan to make them the main meal substitute, you'll need more pieces per guest, which can add up quickly. A balance between hors d'oeuvres and a lighter [dinner buffet](#) can sometimes be the sweet spot.

How to Budget by Guest Count

The most common search phrases are about the cost for 30, 50, or 100 guests. Here's a quick guide.

1. **30 Guests:** \$300–\$750 (drop-off style, small gathering)
2. **50 Guests:** \$500–\$1,250 (popular for mid-size parties or receptions)
3. **100 Guests:** \$1,000–\$2,500+ (often weddings or corporate functions)

Pro tip: Plan for **6–8 hors d'oeuvres per guest per hour** if hors d'oeuvres are the main food. If they're a prelude to dinner, plan for 3–4 per guest. You can also explore our [light reception](#) packages for smaller gatherings.



Menu Examples and Portion Guidance

At Brown Brothers Catering, some of the most requested hors d'oeuvres include:

1. Mini chicken skewers with dipping sauce
2. Shrimp cocktail shooters
3. Tomato bruschetta on crostini
4. Gourmet cheese and charcuterie boards
5. Bite-sized sliders
6. Stuffed mushrooms

A well-rounded menu strikes a balance between flavors and textures. For example:

1. One **hearty protein** (chicken, beef, shrimp)
2. One **vegetarian option**
3. One **lighter bite** (fruit skewers, bruschetta)
4. One **indulgent treat** ([desserts](#))

This mix ensures guests are satisfied without overwhelming your budget.

Expert Tips to Maximize Value



Here's what decades of catering experience in Utah have taught us:

1. **Choose [seasonal wedding menus](#):** In-season produce cuts costs and tastes better.
2. **Mix Premium with Simple:** Pair one or two gourmet options with affordable crowd-pleasers.
3. **Think About Flow:** Place [interactive food stations](#) strategically to prevent guests from crowding one area.
4. **Clarify Staffing Needs:** Decide whether you want servers or self-serve stations early.

At Brown Brothers Catering, we've seen how these small decisions can make a big difference in cost and guest satisfaction.

Why Trust Brown Brothers Catering

We've catered hundreds of [weddings in Utah](#), from intimate gatherings to corporate receptions. Our award-winning service means we understand how to balance budget with presentation. When we say we'll customize a menu to fit your vision, we mean it. We know the numbers, and we know how to make them work for you.

Ready to Plan Your Menu?

If you're at the stage where you're comparing prices and options, now is the perfect time to get specific. Hors d'oeuvres catering doesn't have to feel overwhelming, especially when you have an experienced partner guiding you.

✓ Ready to take the next step? [Get a Free Quote](#) from Brown Brothers Catering today and see how we can tailor a menu to fit your event and budget.

FAQs About Hors d'Oeuvres Catering

How many hors d'oeuvres should I plan per person?

For events where hors d'oeuvres are the only food, plan on 6–8 pieces per person per hour. Guests usually eat more than expected when hors d'oeuvres replace a meal, so err on the higher side. For cocktail hours before dinner, 3–4 pieces per person is usually enough. Always consider the length of the event: longer receptions require more food.

Is hors d'oeuvres catering cheaper than a full meal?

It depends. If hors d'oeuvres are an addition before dinner, they're often cheaper. But when hors d'oeuvres are the main meal substitute, costs can climb because you'll need more variety and higher quantities. For example, 8–10 substantial hors d'oeuvres per person may equal or exceed the cost of a plated dinner, especially if premium ingredients like seafood are included. Learn more about our [buffet-style catering](#) options for comparison.

What is the average catering markup?

Most caterers, including us, calculate pricing by multiplying ingredient costs by around three. This encompasses not only food, but also preparation, staffing, equipment, and overhead. Hors d'oeuvres with fresh, premium ingredients may be slightly more expensive because they require extra labor to prepare and serve.

Do I need servers for hors d'oeuvres?

Not always. Drop-off catering, featuring platters or self-serve stations, works well for casual events and helps keep costs down. Passed hors d'oeuvres, where servers circulate with trays, create a more upscale atmosphere but add labor charges. Your choice depends on the tone of your event. Many weddings opt for a mix of both – station displays plus a few passed trays during cocktail hour. Consider the setting if you're planning [outdoor wedding catering](#).

How much should I tip the catering staff?

Tipping is a standard part of event catering. A good rule of thumb is 10–15 percent of the total bill for staffed events. If your event includes servers, bartenders, or kitchen staff, gratuity is a way to recognize their effort. For drop-off catering, tips are optional but always appreciated, especially for drivers handling setup.

Can hors d'oeuvres work for large events like weddings?

Yes, absolutely. Hors d'oeuvres are popular for weddings because they allow variety, encourage mingling, and can be customized to match the couple's style. For significant events, you will need to plan carefully to ensure sufficient food and staffing are in place. Offering a mix of light and hearty hors d'oeuvres, along with stations, keeps lines short and guests happy. Many couples in Utah choose hors d'oeuvres as the star of their reception menu, and our [wedding catering for large events](#) options are designed for that.

Make Your Event Memorable with Hors d'Oeuvres

Catering hors d'oeuvres is more than a line item on your event budget. It's the piece that sets the tone for how guests feel, mingle, and remember the day. The cost will vary depending on your choices, but with the proper planning, you can create an unforgettable experience without breaking your budget.

If you're ready to explore options, Brown Brothers Catering is here to help you craft a menu that reflects your style and keeps your event running smoothly.

Related Reads:

1. [Wedding Catering in Utah: What to Expect](#)
2. [Buffet vs Plated Catering: Which is Right for Your Event?](#)
3. [How to Plan a Catering Budget That Works](#)