

Historical Banqueting

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Key Terms

- | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| • Banqueting hall | • Hors d'oeuvre | • Nouvelle cuisine | • Soteltes |
| • Banquettes | • Levee | • Pièces montées | • Trencher |
| • Foodways | • Menu-course format | • Potlatch | |



What You Will Learn in This Chapter

The history of the foodways of the ancient Greeks and Romans provide rich traditions on which European and North American societies have developed their food-preparation and food-service styles. In this chapter, we discuss the development of the banquet menu throughout time. We will trace its history from the three-course medieval menu of twenty-five menu items served at the banqueting tables of England's Richard II in A.D. 1387 to the elaborate menu featuring oranges served by the Archbishop of Milan in 1529. The transformation of the menu to the nine-course format that is the basis of contemporary menus occurred in 1867 in Paris, followed closely by 8 + 7 course adoptions. European banqueting traditions are reflected in American banqueting customs from pre-revolutionary dinners to presidential banquets served at the White House in Washington, D.C. Cultural changes in American banqueting practices and the contributions of Thomas Jefferson resulted in the evolution of the White House banquet menu from the medieval format to the early-nineteenth-century French format of nine courses. Presidential menus show the influence of personal style, culminating in the contributions of Jacqueline Kennedy, who brought the influence of the 1960s nouvelle-cuisine revolution to the White House, reducing the menus to four or five courses.

Banqueting: Civilized Customs in Ancient Civilizations

The catering profession as we know it in the twenty-first century has a long and intriguing history, the beginnings of which are found in the ancient civilizations. The Egyptian nobility filled their tombs with foodstuffs and cookware to supply them in the next world, simultaneously covering the walls with murals designed to record food-preparation styles and table settings. From the records and art of the Greeks and Romans come depictions of banqueting scenes filled with food presentations, table customs, decorative arts, and recipes detailing a range of foodstuffs startling in its variety.

Written records from the ancient Greek and Roman periods focus on the types of foods eaten rather than menus for entire meals. There does exist, however, a collection of recipes dating from approximately 42 B.C. to A.D. 37, titled *Cookery and Dining in Ancient Rome*. Concentrating on the dining customs of ancient Rome, this collection of recipes includes familiar dishes, such as Sole in White Wine and Asparagus, as well as a number of now unknown items, such as Sea Scorpion with Turnips and Dasheens (a root vegetable). The origins of popular twentieth-century food items are found in such recipes as Baian Seafood Stew, in which minced, poached oysters, mussels, scallops, and sea nettles are combined with toasted nuts, rue, celery, pepper, coriander, cumin, raisins, wine, broth, reduced wine, and oil.

This seafood stew is similar to the basic recipe for bouillabaisse, a staple of the modern cuisine of southern France.

Greek banqueting featured the hors d'oeuvre trolley, on which were served a number of dishes featuring small portions of different food items. Garlic (boiled and roasted), sea urchins, cockles, sturgeon, and sweet wine sop were among the dishes offered. A fifth-century Roman feast elaborated on this concept:

With a drink of heated wine with honey, to be followed by fresh eggs, quarters of beef, mutton, and pork, all highly seasoned with pepper, pickles, caraway, and poppy seeds, saffron, aromatic balsam, honey, and salt. There was also boar meat with a garniture of cooked apples, deer, roebuck, hare, and even urus, a wild buffalo. Everything was tasted, from grasshopper to ostrich, from dormouse to wild boar. The whole world was put to gastronomical use, by both soldiers and travellers. Guinea fowl and truffles were brought from Africa, and rabbits from Spain and pheasants from Greece and peacocks from Asia. The number of courses of the banquet gradually rose to twenty and more. A kind of herald announced the merits of such dishes as were worthy of special attention, and prolonged the pleasures of the table. There must always be actors, singers, mimes, clowns, and everything that could add to the pleasure of people who had gathered for the sole purpose of being amused.¹

The Banqueting Hall

The roots of the modern banqueting menu are found in the medieval period of European history. The outline of thirteenth-century meal service followed these instructions for the serving of dishes set down by Bartholomaeus Anglicus, a Parisian professor of theology:

At feasts, first meat is prepared and arrayed, guests be called in together, forms and stools be set up in the hall, and tables, cloths, and towels be ordained, disposed, and made ready. Guests be set with the lord in the chief place of the board before the guests wash their hands. First knives, spoons, and salt be set on the board, and then bread and drink and many divers messes. The guests are gladdened with lutes and harps. Now wine and messes of meat are brought forth and departed. At the last cometh fruit and spices, and when they have eaten, cloths and relief [trestles] are borne away, and guests wash and wipe their hands again. The grace is said, and guests thank the Lord. Then, for gladness and comfort, drink is brought yet again.²

Food-preparation methods included roasting, boiling, or stewing, as seen in the working figures from the *Angelus Book of Hours*.

Elaborate preparations and rituals accompanied banquets of the medieval period. At a 1387 feast in honor of England's Richard II, the head table was placed on a raised platform and with long tables set parallel to it. The king was provided with an armchair, while the other guests sat on backless benches or banquettes. The use of banquettes for seating was the origin of the term *banquet*.

It is two thirty, about half an hour before dinner is to be served. The marshal raises his rod in the sunlit hall and commands the ewerer to set three linen cloths on the high borde. Meanwhile, ushers and grooms arrange subordinate tables with cloths, napkins and surnapes. At each setting

the ushers place a trencher, a mazer cup, and a spoon. . . . Suddenly clarions echo throughout the hall announcing the arrival of the king and honored guests.³

Following the ceremony in which the king's trencher (a plate cut from stale bread) was prepared and drinking water tasted, the meal commenced.

As the Latin grace is chanted in unison, a procession of trusted servants emerges from the kitchen, each carrying a resplendent creation prepared by the chefs. Hidden under ornate silver covers are the multitude of delicacies that Richard will sample on this day.⁴

The three-course menu outline, traditional to the medieval period, contained as many as twenty-five dishes per course. This became the standard for menu planning used well into the nineteenth century. In Figure 1.1, a three-course banquet menu served in Paris in 1393 details the mixture of sweets, sour, and spices traditionally found in each course.

FIRST COURSE
Miniature Pastries Filled with Cod Liver or Beef Marrow
Cameline Meat Brevet (pieces of meat in a thin cinnamon sauce)
Beef Marrow Fritters
Eels, in a Thick, Spicy Puree
Loach, in a Cold Green Sauce Flavored with Spices and Sage
Large Cuts of Roast or Boiled Meat
Saltwater Fish
Fritters
Roast Bream and Darioles
Sturgeon
Jellies
•
SECOND COURSE
"The Best Toast That May Be Had"
Freshwater Fish
Broth with Bacon
Meat Tile
(sautéed chicken or veal in a spiced sauce of pounded crayfish tails, almonds, and toasted bread)
Capon Pastries and Crisps
Blank Manger (blancmange)
•
THIRD COURSE
Fruментry
Venison
Lampreys with Hot Sauce
Sweets and Confections
Spiced Wine and Wafers

FIGURE 1.1 Medieval three-course menu, 1393
(Source: Tannahill, *Food in History*, 1973, pp. 185–186.)

Additional documentation of the foodways of the Middle Ages is found in the decorative prayer books called the *Book of Hours*. This is not one book but many, hand decorated prayer books whose illustrations record the historical and seasonal events of the period. The illustrations in the *Book of Hours* created for the Duc de Berry between 1412 and 1416 record a banquet celebration whose tablesetting includes linen tablecloths, gold and jeweled tableware, and a stuffed peacock and other foods.

Renaissance European Banqueting

The banqueting menu for the marriage of Henry VI of England to Joan of Navarre in 1403 featured a sotelte with each course. Soteltes were food sculptures and showpieces molded or sculpted into animals, figures, or representatives of clowns and coats of arms. The elaborate pièces montées of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were later versions of the sotelte.

At a banquet hosted by the Archbishop of Milan in 1529, oranges were the featured food ingredient included in the dishes of a three-course menu, seen in Figure 1.2.

In 1529, the Archbishop of Milan gave a sixteen-course dinner that included caviar and oranges fried with sugar and cinnamon, brill and sardines with slices of orange and lemon, one thousand oysters with pepper and oranges, lobster salad with citrons, sturgeon in aspic covered with orange juice, fried sparrows with oranges, individual salads containing citrons into which the coat of arms of the diner had been carved, orange fritters, a soufflé full of raisins and pine nuts and covered with sugar and orange juice, five hundred fried oysters with lemon slices, and candied peels of citrons and oranges.

FIGURE 1.2 Dinner for the Archbishop of Milan, 1529
(Source: McPhee, *Oranges*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966, p. 69.)

Eighteenth-Century Banqueting

By 1727 the banquet menu had been abridged to two main-course settings, with the third course reduced to fruits, nuts, and cheese served with appropriate ports. Menus in the American colonies mirrored the English menus of the period in the mid-1700s, as seen in Figure 1.3.

FIRST COURSE		
Soup	Ragout of Breast of Veal	Roast Venison
Boiled Leg of Lamb and Cauliflower served with Smaller Dishes of Stewed Eels		
Stewed Carp	A Puree of Pigeons	
A Roast Pig		
•		
SECOND COURSE		
Four Partridges and Two Quails	Lobsters	
Almond Cheesecakes and Custards with Smaller Dishes of Four Pocket and Lamb Testicles		
Apricot Fritters		
Sturgeon	Fried Sole	
Green Peas	Potted Pigeons	

FIGURE 1.3 Colonial American menu, 1727
(Source: Tannahill, *Food in History*, 1973, p. 334.)

The eighteenth-century menu underwent a metamorphosis to become the foundation of the twentieth-century banquet menu. The menu in Figure 1.4 details the items served in two courses by the Duke de Richelieu to members of the Hanoverian Court. The duke was limited to serving meat-based menu items due to a shortage in his food supplies.



FIGURE 1.4 Dinner for the Duce de Richelieu
(Source: *The New Larousse Gastronomique*, by Montagne. Copyright © 1977 by the Hamlyn Publishing Group, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Crown Publishers, a division of Random House, Inc.)

Nineteenth-Century Menu Revisions

By 1867 the menu format contained a sharp reduction in the number of menu items offered and a separation of items into distinct menu categories. The menu in Figure 1.5, for example, was served at the Café Anglais in Paris in 1867. Figure 1.6 reflects the evolution of the classic banquet menu into the nine-course format.

SOUPS

Imperatrice—Fontanges

•

INTERMEDIATE COURSE

Soufflé à la Reine

Filet of Sole à la Venitienne

Callops of Tubot au Gratin

Saddle of Mutton with Breton Puree

•

ENTRÉES

Chickens à la Portugaise

Hot Quail Pâté

Lobster à la Parisienne

Champagne Sorbets

•

ROTS

Duckling à la Rouennaise

Canapés of Bunting

•

FINAL COURSE

Aubergines à l'Espagnole

Asparagus

Cassoulets Princesse

Iced Bombe

Fruit

•

WINES

Madère Retour des Indes 1846

Sherry 1821

Chateau-D'Yguem 1847

Chambertin 1847

Chateau-Margaux 1847

Chateau-Latour 1847

Chateau-Lafite 1848

FIGURE 1.5 Menu served at the Café Anglais, Paris, 1867

(Source: *The New Larousse Gastronomique*, by Montagne. Copyright © 1977 by the Hamlyn Publishing Group, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Crown Publishers, a division of Random House, Inc.)

FIGURE 1.6 Nineteenth-century nine-course menu format

(Source: *The New Larousse Gastronomique*, by Montagne. Copyright © 1977 by the Hamlyn Publishing Group, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Crown Publishers, a division of Random House, Inc.)

First Course:	Soup
Second Course:	Hot hors d'oeuvres
Third Course:	Cold hors d'oeuvres
Fourth Course:	Intermediate fish course
Fifth Course:	Intermediate meat, poultry, or game course
Sixth Course:	Entrée
Seventh Course:	Rotis (poultry, game, or beef)
Eighth Course:	Salad
Ninth Course:	Entremets (dessert)

An interpretation of this format appears in Figure 1.7, a menu developed by the artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec for a banquet party in Paris in 1896. It is interesting to note that the third course is imported trout from Lake Michigan in the United States. Some of the menu items are noted only by course, whereas others are specifically named. The seventh course, sweet, would have been a fruit tart. The eighth course, dessert, would have been fruit. Missing from this menu is the traditional cheese course that, when served, preceded the sweet course.

OXTAIL SOUP
•
HORS D'OEUVRE
Lake Michigan Trout
Haunch of Venison on a Puree of Chestnuts
Foie Gras in a Crust
•
SALAD
•
SWEET COURSE
•
DESSERT
Grand Table Wine, Vouvray, Corton

FIGURE 1.7 Toulouse-Lautrec Menu, 1896

(Source: Toulouse-Lautrec and Joyant, *The Art of Cuisine*, 1966, p. 159.)

Another version of the reduced-course adaptation is found in the menu served to Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle, England, on December 17, 1894, seen in Figure 1.8.

SOUP	POTAGE
	Vermicelli à la Windsor À la Pazanne
	•
FISH	POISSON
	La Barbeau, sauce Hollandaise Les Filet Aigelfin Frits
	•
MAIN COURSES	ENTRÉES
	La Crouquettes de Volaille
	La Mousse de Grouse au Fumet
	•
MEAT	RELEVÉ
	Roast Beef Champignons Etuffe
	•
ROAST	ROTIS
	Les Canarde au Bigarade La Chicorees à la Crème
	•
SWEETS	ENTREMETS
	•
	Les Beignets d'Anana Le Pain de Pommes Rubane Chantilly
	•
CHEESE	FROMAGE
	Cheese Straws
	Side Table
	•
	Hot and Cold Fowl, Tongue, Beef

FIGURE 1.8 Her majesty's dinner, Monday, December 17, 1894

(Source: Reprinted with permission of PBC International from Greenstein, *A la Carte: A Tour of Dining History*, p. 123. © 1992.)

European menu presentation continued to influence the United States. Figure 1.9 shows a banquet dinner given in 1866 for President Andrew Johnson at Delmonico's restaurant in New York City.

WINES	POTAGES
Amontillado	Consommé Chatelaine Bisque aux Quenelles
	•
	HORS D'OEUVRES
	Timbales de Gibier à Venitienne
	•
	POISSONS
Hechheimerberg	Saumon Livonien Paupiettes de Kingfish
	•
	RELEVES
Champagne	Selle d'Agneau aux Concombres
	Filet de Boeuf à la Pocohontas
	•
	ENTRÉES
Chateaux-Margaux	Supreme de Volaille Dauphine Ballontines de Pigeon Lucullus
	Filets de Caneton Tyrolienne Cotelettes à la Marechale
	Ris de Veau Montgomery Bouins à la Richelieu
	•
	Sorbet à la Dunderberge
	•
	ROTS
Clos de Vougeot	Bebcassines Bardees
	Ortolans Farcis
	Entremets de Legume
	Petits Pois à l'Anglaise Tomates Farcies
	Aubergines Frites Atichauts Barigoule
	•
	ENTREMETS SUCRES
Tokai Imperial	Peches à la New York Mille-feuilles Pompadour
	Abricots Siciliens Gateau Soleil
	Macedoine de Fruits Moscovites aux Oranges
	Bavarois aux Fraises Gelée Californienne
	Crème aux Amandes Meringues Chantilly
	Beausejour au Malaga Biscuits Glacés aux Pistaches
	Madère Faquat Fruits et Desserts Pièces Montées
	Monument de Washington Fontaine des Aigles
	Temple de la Liberte Trophée Nationale

FIGURE 1.9 Delmonico's menu, 1866
(Source: Cannon and Brooks, *The President's Cookbook*, 1986, p. 263.)

American Banqueting Traditions

Native American Feasts

Feasting is an American tradition that dates to the social ceremonies of many of the Native American tribes. Early written records of naturalists and explorers, such as John Bartram and George Catlin, provide a fascinating glimpse of the use of food in ceremonies in Native American societies. A ceremonial feast called a *potlatch* was held by tribes in the American Northwest to mark such important occasions as a marriage or the succession to a chieftainship.

The rules of potlatch required the host to provide, as a sign of conspicuous wealth, the best-quality foods available in quantities too great to be eaten by the number of invited guests.

He was also expected to give away a fortune in gifts. . . . [A]t a single Kwakiutl potlatch, the guests . . . were gratified with eight canoes, six slaves, fifty-four elkskins, two thousand silver bracelets, seven thousand brass bracelets, and thirty-three thousand blankets.⁵

George Catlin was served the following feast by the Mandan plains tribe:

The simple feast which was spread before us consisted of three dishes only, two of which were served in wooden bowls, and the third eaten in an earthen vessel. . . . The last contained a quantity of pem-i-can and marrow-fat; and one of the former held a fine brace of buffalo ribs, delightfully roasted; and the other was filled with a kind of paste or pudding, made of the flour of the "pomme blanche," as the French call it, a delicious turnip of the prairie, finely flavored with the buffalo berries which are . . . used with divers dishes in cooking, as we in civilized countries use dried currants, which they very much resemble.⁶

The Colonial Period

Pre-revolutionary American cuisine and the patterns in which meals were served primarily followed English custom. The menu pattern for formal meals was offered in two courses, each a complete meal in itself. Figure 1.10 details a banquet meal like those served in Providence, Rhode Island, at the home of wealthy merchants during the early 1700s.

General Nathanael Greene wrote to General James Varnum of his visit to Philadelphia in 1779:

Luxury and dissipation is everywhere prevalent. When I was in Boston last Summer I thought luxury very predominant there: but they were no more to compare with than now prevailing in Philadelphia, than an Infant Babe to a full grown Man. I dined at one table where there was a hundred and Sixty dishes: and at several others not far behind.⁷

FIRST COURSE
Asparagus Soup, remove*
Leg of Grass Lamb boiled with capers, carrots, and turnips
Boiled Potato Pudding
Venison Pasties
Rice Pellaw
Forced Cock's Combs
•
SECOND COURSE
White Fricassee of Rabbit
Salamagundi
Ragoo of French Beans with Carrot Force
Water-Soakey
Pear Pie
•
Followed by
Cheese and Grapes
***Remove" indicates that the soup tureen was removed after the soup course and replaced by the meat platters.

**FIGURE 1.10 A dinner for
June, 1700s**

(Source: The Rhode
Island Historical Society,
Providence, Rhode Island.)

In the South during the same period, a dinner at Shirley Hall plantation in Virginia was described:

His service is all of silver and you drink your porter out of silver goblets. . . . The finest Virginia hams, and the saddle of mutton, Turkey, then canvas back duck, beef, oysters. . . . Then comes the sparkling champagne, after that dessert, plum pudding, tarts, ice cream, peaches preserved in Brandy . . . then the table is cleared and on come the figs, almonds and raisins, and the richest Madeira, the best Port and the softest Malmsey wine I ever tasted.⁸

Nineteenth-Century Banqueting

The rich table traditions of the American colonies were continued in menus such as that shown in Figure 1.11, served in December 1884 at the Fifth Annual Ball and Game Supper in East Wallingford, Connecticut. The variety of Native American foods and traditional New England cooking is apparent in this menu, even as it follows the classical menu format. Although heavy in the dessert section, the influence of the three-course menu is still evident in the presence of the relish course and the fruits and nuts in the dessert course.

OYSTERS

Escalloped Stewed Raw

•

GAME

Mallard Duck with Currant Jelly Saddle of Venison Roast Bear with Cranberry Sauce

Red Head Duck with Confiture Wild Turkey Oyster Dressing

Broiled Partridge Roast Wild Goose with Raspberry Jelly Quail on Toast

•

ENTRÉES

Chicken Ham Corned Beef Lobster Chicken Salad Lobster Salad

•

RELISHES

Chow Chow Pickled Cucumbers Mixed Pickles Worcestershire Sauce

Spiced Onions Tomato Catsup French Mustard Olives Celery Lettuce

•

BREAD

Wheat Bread Brown Bread Graham Bread

•

PASTRY

Apple Pie Meat Pie Cranberry Pie Lemon Pie

Blueberry Pie Raspberry Pie

•

CAKES AND PRESERVES

Fruit Cake Sponge Cake Gold Cake Currant Cake Coconut Cake

Jelly Cake Delicate Cake Chocolate Cake Ribbon Cake

Cup Cake Peach Preserves Quince Preserves Raspberry Preserves

•

DESSERTS

Vanilla Ice Cream Lemon Ice Cream

Grapes Apples Oranges Layer Raisins Filberts

English Walnuts Pecan Nuts Soft Shell Almonds

FIGURE 1.11 Ball and game supper, 1884

American Presidential Banqueting

President George Washington

The presidency of George Washington was America’s opportunity to entertain the world stage. The format for meals followed the three-course menu pattern popular at the time in Europe. Figure 1.12 shows the place setting for each of the courses outlined in Figure 1.13. This elaborate setting was repeated for each course.

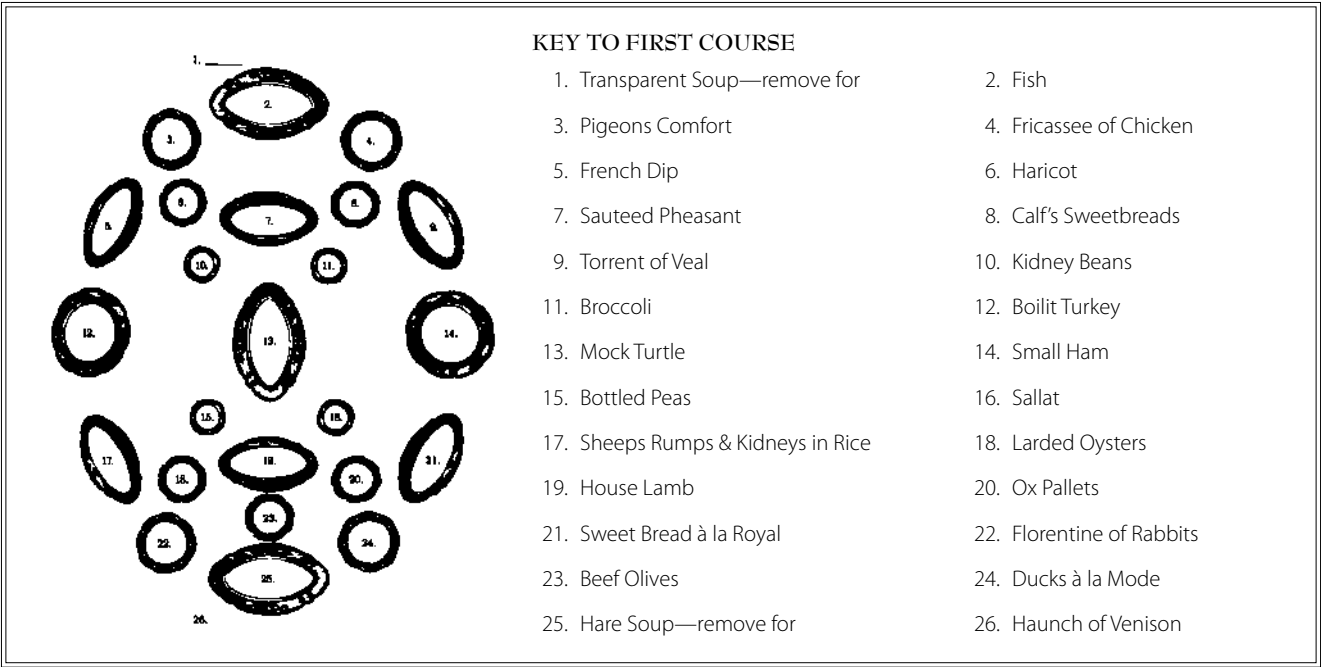
The menu in Figure 1.13, taken from Martha Washington’s cookbook, illustrates the first two courses of dinner. The third course, not listed here, was offered after the tablecloth was removed. Decanters of port, cheeses, nuts, and fruit were placed on the table. Menus from the period indicate the diversity and availability of food products in the mid-Atlantic region, as well as Washington’s eagerness to present them to his guests.

The food served at the President’s table from 1789 to the end of Washington’s second term in 1797 indicates the new nation’s dependence on the land. Game fowl, meats, plantation-grown fruits and vegetables, fish from local rivers or the Atlantic reveal the abundance of the land. Spliced through the menus are the remnants of Washington’s English heritage—puddings, cream trifles, a taste for port and wine.⁹

President Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson greatly influenced the development of banqueting styles in America. Following his years as minister plenipotentiary to the court of Louis XVI, Jefferson imported many of the traditions, foods, and wines of the European table to his Virginia home,

FIGURE 1.12 Eighteenth-century table settings



FIRST COURSE		
Small Chicken Patties	Soup Puree	Pork Cutlets
Red Cabbage Stewed (replaced with salmon)	Sauce Robert	
Boiled Chicken	Shoulder of Mutton in Epigram	Mashed Potatoes
Plain Butter	Ham	Boiled Turkey
Shrimp Sauce	Beef Tremblongue	French Beans Fricaseed
Dressed Greens	Soup Santea	Oyster Loaves
(replaced by Stewed Carp)		
Scotch Collops		
•		
SECOND COURSE		
Maids of Honor	Two Wild Ducks	Rhenish Cream
Asparagus à la Petit Poi	Lambs Tails au Bechamel	Prawns
Sauce	Hare Roasted	Sauce
Two Teal	Sweetbreads à la Dauphin	Plovers
Crayfish	Three Partridges	Sauce
Sauce	Chardoons	
Fruit in Jelly	Custards	Fricassed Birds

FIGURE 1.13 Martha Washington's menu

(Source: Cannon and Brooks, *The President's Cookbook*, 1968, p. 9.)

Monticello. As president of the United States, Jefferson established a pattern of elegant banquets featuring French cuisine and the best available wines.

Never before had such dinners been given in the President's house, nor such a variety of the finest and most costly wines. In his entertainments, republican simplicity was united with epicurean delicacy; while the absence of splendor, ornament, and profusion was more than compensated by the neatness, order, and elegant simplicity that pervaded the whole establishment.¹⁰

A summary from November 5, 1804, to February 22, 1805, totals forty dinners served to 564 guests. The banqueting style Jefferson brought to America was termed *cuisine bourgeois*, a simplification of the heavy, three-course meals held over from the Middle Ages and used in Europe through the eighteenth century (see Figure 1.14).

Similar to the twentieth-century modifications to French cuisine, known as *nouvelle cuisine*, these changes were a reaction to the rich stocks, sauces, and theatrical pièces montées of the eighteenth century. This cuisine appealed to Jefferson's preference for simple elegance.

Jefferson's contributions to American cuisine included ice cream, vanilla, pasta, and tomatoes. Vanilla flavoring was a new ingredient for American cookery, appearing in the recipe for vanilla ice cream written by Jefferson himself. Pasta appears in Jefferson's notes as *macaroni*, now known as *tubular pasta*. Further investigation shows, however, that he was actually referring to the pasta cut known as *spaghetti*. The tomato, meanwhile, had been taken from Central America and popularized in Southern Europe. Jefferson brought the fruit and its seeds back to Monticello for cultivation.

FIGURE 1.14 Jefferson menu

(Source: Rysavy and Leighton, *A Treasury of White House Cooking*, 1972, p. 184.)

Gazpacho
Tio Pepe Sherry
Hot Devil's Crab
Roast Leg of Lamb, conserve of currants
Chateau Latour
Saffron Rice Green Peas with Mint Corn Pudding
Asparagus Vinaigrette
Montrachet
Cheese Mold Beaten Biscuits
Strawberry Meringues Chantilly
Pedro Ximenz
Nuts and Candied Fruits
Coffee Brandy

Jefferson's fascination with French cuisine extended to the equipment used to prepare and serve it, and he purchased in Paris a large quantity of cookware and bakeware. On his return to Monticello from France, the following inventory was added to the plantation books:

silver service
 pewterware
 dishes for hors d'oeuvres
 porcelain cups
 saucers
 plates
 soup tureens and bowls
 serving platters and casseroles
 crystal goblets
 wine tumblers
 decanters
 a tea urn and coffee pot

For the kitchen, he included:

28 round saucepans
 19 saucepan covers
 frying pans
 food warmers
 chocolate molds
 ice molds
 pie pans
 spoons, ladles
 cleavers, knives
 pair of kitchen scales¹¹

President John Quincy Adams

By 1825 the John Quincy Adams family occupied the White House and continued the tradition of presidential entertaining. The following describes a levee, or reception, held in 1829:

Gentlemen and ladies both attend, arrive about eight and leave about ten. The company is treated with coffee, tea and a variety of cakes, jellies, ice-cream, and white and red wine, mixed and unmixed, and sometimes other cordials and liquors, and frequently with West Indian fruit; all of which are carried about the rooms amongst the guests, upon large trays by servants dressed in livery.¹²

President John Tyler

Like Thomas Jefferson, John Tyler favored informality blended with fine cuisine. A gala ball held in the White House in 1845, near the end of Tyler's presidency, featured:

. . . enormous bouquets of flowers filling the rooms and side tables loaded with every imaginable delicacy. The atmosphere radiated luxury and extravagance. The evening was a huge success and much talked of for years to come. There were many parties given during the holiday season for Washington officialdom. Always the tables were laden with substantial and varied foods. Roast ham, a saddle of venison or some other heavy roast, roast wild ducks, or other poultry was in evidence. Enormous supplies of homemade cakes and puddings were on hand. Punch, madeira, and the ubiquitous champagne were ready. Such galas usually began around eight o'clock and ended at eleven.¹³

President James Buchanan

James Buchanan brought the formal elegance of European society back to the White House, enlisting a French caterer named Gautuer to reign over the White House kitchen. Figure 1.15 itemizes the purchasing arrangements to fill the menu for Buchanan's inaugural ball, to which 5,000 guests were invited on March 4, 1857.

Sixty Saddle of Mutton
Eight Rounds of Beef
Seventy-five Hams
Four Saddles of Venison
Four Hundred Gallons of Oysters
Five Hundred Quarts of Chicken Salad
One Hundred Twenty-Five Tongues
Five Hundred Quarts of Jellies
Twelve Hundred Quarts of Ice Cream in Assorted Flavors
Cake Pyramid: Four Feet High decorated with the Flags of 31 States and Territories

FIGURE 1.15 Purchasing requirements for Buchanan's inaugural ball menu
(Source: Cannon and Brooks, *The President's Cookbook*, 1968, p. 221.)

President Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln’s second inaugural ball in 1865 was not to be overshadowed by the ongoing Civil War. The menu in Figure 1.16 reflects the diverse cuisine styles of the first 100 years of the American presidency, combining the nation’s bounty of foods so evident at Washington’s table with the influences of French cuisine.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the formal seven-course French menu in Figure 1.17 was served on the occasion of a state dinner at the White House.



FIGURE 1.16 President Lincoln’s inaugural ball menu, 1865

(Source: *The President’s Cookbook*, 1968, p. 235.)

Blue Point Oysters
•
POTAGES
Potage Tortue à l'Anglaise Consommé Printanière Royale
•
HORS D'OEUVRES
Canapé à la Russe Timbales à Talleyrand
•
POISSONS
Saumon, Sauce Hollandaise Grenadines de Bass
Pommes de Terre Duchese Cucumber Salade
•
RELEVES
Seile d'Agneau, Sauce Menthe Filet de Boeuf à la Richelieu
•
ENTRÉES
Ris de Veau à la Perigieux Cotelettes d'Agneau d'or Maison
Terapin à la Maryland
•
ROTS
Canvas Back Duck
•
German Asparagus Petit Pois
•
ENTREMETS
Golde au Champagne Flombiere aux Framboise
Pudding Diplomate
Cafe Fruits Fromage

FIGURE 1.17 State Dinner at the White House
 (Source: Ziemann and Gillette, *The White House Cookbook*, 1906, p. 481.)

President Ulysses S. Grant

Diverse influences in menu planning created changes in the White House kitchen from one administration to another. In 1877 Ulysses S. Grant served the menu in Figure 1.18, to President-elect and Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes. A combination of American foods served in the classical French dinner format, accompanied by the appropriate wines for each course, this menu embodies the marriage of American cuisine and traditional French dining customs.

Sherry	Consommé Imperial
	Bisque de Grevisse
	Woodcock Patties*
	Salmon
White Wine	Roast of Beef
	Breast of Pheasant
	Crawfish Pudding
	Goose Livers
Roman Punch	Turkey
	Artichokes
	Canvasback Duck
Red Wine	Sweet Warm Dish**
*Woodcock is a small game bird that was common to the East Coast of the United States.	
**A form of dessert pudding.	

FIGURE 1.18 President Grant’s menu, 1877
(Source: Cannon and Brooks, *The President’s Cookbook*, 1968, p. 279.)

President Franklin D. Roosevelt

Franklin D. Roosevelt served the informal American cuisine menu shown in Figure 1.19 to General Charles de Gaulle for a working lunch in 1944. In marked contrast to this simple meal is the highly formal French menu in Figure 1.20, served by Richard M. Nixon to the French president Georges Pompidou and his wife in 1970.

Jellied Bouillon
Boiled Chicken Currant Jelly
Asparagus Duchess Potatoes
Parsleyed Carrots
Tossed Salad
Vanilla Ice Cream Crushed Raspberries
Angel Food Cake
Coffee

FIGURE 1.19 Roosevelt–de Gaulle luncheon menu, 1944
(Source: Rysavy and Leighton, *A Treasury of White House Cooking*, 1972, p. 140.)

Le Salmon Lafayette
Le Contre-filet de Boeuf aux Cèpes
Les Pommes Nouvelles
Les Asperges Fraîches Hollandaise
Le Laitue de Kentucky
Le Fromage de Camembert
Le Melon Glacé à la Vigneronne
Les Petits Fours

FIGURE 1.20 President Nixon’s menu for President Pompidou
(Source: Rysavy and Leighton, *A Treasury of White House Cooking*, 1972, p. 107.)

The Kennedy Period

Jacqueline Kennedy was the individual who, next to Thomas Jefferson, most significantly influenced the style of banqueting in the White House. Her personal interest in the quality and style of cuisine and service for White House functions changed the patterns followed in previous presidencies. Mrs. Kennedy, like Jefferson, dramatically changed the menu format, reducing the number of courses from seven to four or a maximum of five, as seen in Figure 1.21. The emphasis on simple elegance that marked Jefferson's banqueting style came full circle 165 years later with Mrs. Kennedy's effort to imbue the White House with a similar style. This change reflected contemporary dining trends and reduced the overall dining time, allowing more time for the evening entertainments that became a hallmark of the Kennedy presidency, as seen in Figure 1.22.

The subsequent administrations of Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama have all brought their particular influences to the format of White House dining, from barbecues to clambakes to formal state dinners. It was Jacqueline Kennedy, however, who made the greatest mark on the traditions of White House dining in the twentieth century.



FIGURE 1.21 Kennedy White House menus
(Source: Lincoln, *The Kennedy White House Parties*, 1967, p. 11.)



**FIGURE 1.22 Kennedy
White House
entertainment**

(Source: Picture File
Number: KN-C 19427, John
F. Kennedy Presidential
Library and Museum, Boston,
Massachusetts.)

Summary

Modern banqueting has its roots in the traditions of the Greeks and Romans. The Greeks introduced the hors d'oeuvre course, to which the Romans added up to twenty courses as they furthered the development of the banquet feast. From this elaborate format evolved the three-course medieval menu, which presented as many as twenty-five menu items with each course.

The menu-format revisions of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries transformed the three primary courses with multiple dishes into a series of nine courses, each featuring an individual menu item. These revisions were incorporated into menus throughout Europe and America in a variety of formats.

The history of American banqueting begins with the feasts of the Native Americans. The menu formats of early colonial American banquets were primarily influenced by England. French cuisine and menu formats initially threaded their way to the colonies via English recipes and customs. The emigration of French royalists during the French Revolution accelerated the assimilation of both French cuisine and menus with American banqueting customs. Thomas Jefferson greatly aided the development of American banqueting during his years in the White House. His simplification of the menu and emphasis on wines were major elements in the development of a style of banqueting that prevailed over the next 165 years of White House functions. During the presidency of John F. Kennedy, banquets were enhanced by the contributions of Jacqueline Kennedy. Like Jefferson, Mrs. Kennedy preferred menus of simple elegance that concentrated on a high quality of food and service.

The records tracing the development of the banquet menu throughout the centuries provide a rich and exciting chronicle of food items, recipes, and traditions. Many of these food items and recipes endure in our contemporary food customs.

Questions

1. How did the dining customs of Greek and Roman societies influence contemporary menus and food items?
2. In what period of history did the three-course banqueting menu become established?
3. What historical references and meals can be used to identify food-preparation styles, dining customs, and methods of service?
4. Identify food items from the historical menus that are offered on contemporary restaurant and catering menus.
5. Identify the similarities in the contributions of Thomas Jefferson and Jacqueline Kennedy to the development of banquet menus and services in the White House.

