

DIY Wedding Reception & Catering Guide

Use this handy checklist to help keep yourself organized. Make your menu and checklist of items you plan to use on the notes on the last page.

Furniture

- Dining tables for guests
- Chairs for all guests + extra
- Head table for wedding party
- Guest book & present table
- Cake table
- Drinks/bar table
- Buffet table (6-8 ft combined)
- Table for Music
- Dessert table
- Coat rack

Eating & Drinking Tools

- Bride & Groom glasses
- Champagne glasses for toasts
- Glasses for drinks
- Plastic cups (if kids are coming)
- Wedding cake knife
- Cutlery (Knives, forks, spoons)
- Plates (Main meal & Cake)
- Bowls / Water jugs
- Napkins
- Salt-and-pepper shakers
- Serving spoons, forks, tongs
- Pot holders / trivets
- Garbage Cans

Decorations

- Candles for tables
- Lights (white Christmas lights!)
- Flowers and vases
- Banners / streamers / balloons
- Table Favors
- Chair coverings
- Linens or tablecloths
- Equipment for Music

Drinks

- Soft Drinks / Mixers
- Liquor / Wine / Beer
- Coffee (creamer, milk, sugar)
- Water / Ice
- Cold Storage

The \$200 "Cheat" Menu for 50 People

Item	Amount Needed	Estimated Cost
Pulled Pork or Chicken	15 lbs (Raw weight)	\$45.00
Slider Buns	75-100 Buns	\$25.00
Tortellini Caprese Salad	5 lbs Pasta + Fixings	\$35.00
Veggie & Dip Platter	Bulk Veggies + Hummus	\$25.00
Cheese & Cracker Board	3-4 Large Blocks + Crackers	\$30.00
Mini Desserts	Bulk Brownies/Puffs	\$20.00
Condiments/Slaw	Assorted	\$15.00
TOTAL	Feeds 50 Guests	~\$195.00

Insider Prep Tips

The Protein: Shred after slow-cooking. Pork stays moister than chicken!

The Filler: Tortellini salad is heavy—people eat fewer expensive sliders.

Cold Food Hack: Nest one chafing pan inside another with ice in between to keep cold food fresh.

Presentation & 7-Day Countdown

7 Days Out: Inventory slow cookers, chafing dishes, and linens.

4 Days Out: Buy non-perishables (drinks, dry pasta, BBQ sauce).

2 Days Out: Fresh run! Wash and chop all veggies today.

1 Day Out: "Heavy Lifting." Cook & shred meat. Boil pasta.

The Day of: Styling, not cooking!

- **4h Before:** Meat in slow cookers on "Low." Tuck greenery into tiers.
- **2h Before:** Finish Tortellini Salad/prep. Cover & stage in fridge or counters.
- **1h Before:** Double check checklist (food, linens, silverware, etc.).
- **30m Before:** Set out the food and light your candles!

MY SECRET HACK: Shred meat the night before and let it sit in the fridge in its juices. Reheating it the next day makes it 10x moister and keeps you out of the kitchen!

