3.01 N MEAL SERVICE CLASSIFICATIONS
Meal Service Classifications

Meal service is the term used to describe how a meal is served for any given occasion.

**Classifications are:**

- Family-style
- Buffet
- Plate
- Russian/Continental
Family Style

- Used at home for family meals
- Used in home-style restaurants
- Serving dishes of food are passed around the table to the right
- Beverages are poured before seating and handed to diners

Informal style of meal service
Family Style Example
Family Style (continued)

- Paper or cloth napkins may be used
- A tablecloth and/or placemats may be used
- A centerpiece may be used
Buffet Style

- Used in casual restaurants and at large gatherings, such as for a business, family or church events.
- Cafeterias are a type of buffet where items are priced separately.
- True buffets usually price the meal as a whole including beverages.
- Informal meal style
Buffet Example
Buffet (continued)

- Plates are at the beginning of the serving line.

- Flatware and napkins may be at the beginning or the end of the serving line.

- Beverages are picked up in the line or at another station.

- Sometimes buffets are very formal event, such as at weddings. Other times they may be more informal style.
Plate Service

- Used in restaurants.
- Flatware and beverage ware, are on the table with space left for plate.
- Food is portioned onto plates in kitchen and brought to the table.
- Often a more formal meal style
Plate Service  Table set-up
Plate Service (continued)

- Serving dishes are not needed which makes for easier cleanup.
- Cloth napkins and tablecloths are usually present.
- Placemats might be used at home on top of the tablecloth.
- Formal restaurants use tablecloths.
Russian/Continental

- Used predominantly at fine restaurants.
- Food is portioned out in the kitchen and served by a wait staff person.
- No serving dishes are used, and dishes are removed after each course.
- Flatware is course specific and may be numerous.
- Highly formal meal
Russian/Continental
Meal Service  How the meal is served

Classifications

- Family-style
- Buffet
- Plate
- Russian/Continental

The properly set table provides each diner with the tableware pieces needed for the meal being served.