

Menu Planning

Chapter

15

A menu is virtually a list of dishes planned for production in a catering operation and may include full meals, snacks or beverages. It performs a number of functions:

- Introduces the establishment to the customer.
- Authorises production of meals in the kitchen.
- Helps to prepare shopping lists for foods and ingredients
- Forms the basis for establishing purchasing procedures.
- Determines the type of equipment, staff skills supervision required.
- Helps to organise spaces and work in stores, kitchens and service areas.
- Determines the style of service to be set up.
- Forms the basis for the calculation of costs, overhead expenses and profits.
- Reflects the type of customer the establishment wishes to attract.
- Satisfies customers in terms of nutrition, hunger, as well as their social and psychological needs.
- Introduces interesting food combinations to customers, and through specialty foods imparts knowledge of the foods eaten in different states, countries and cultures.
- Provides a means of developing good eating habits in people.

There is no doubt from the above that the menu forms the core of all other activities in a food service establishment, as illustrated in Fig. 15.1.

The success of a food service operation, no matter what its size, depends heavily on those who plan the menus and how they do it. While it may seem a simple exercise of providing something to eat and drink, in practice good menu planning requires a lot of skill. It is important therefore, that people responsible for planning menus have the following knowledge and implementing skills:

- **Wide knowledge of foods:** This involves knowledge about different kinds and varieties of foods; their seasonal availability; nutritional and anti-nutritional factors; and the presence of toxic elements in certain food varieties; the edible-portion obtained from each food; colour, taste and flavour differences and how they can best be combined for meals; acceptability and cost factors.
- **Knowledge of different preparation methods and service:** Even though the menu planner does not necessarily prepare or serve the food, it is important for him to know which food is best prepared by which method of cooking. This is possible only if the planner knows about the inherent qualities of foods in terms of texture, composition, colour,

flavour, and all other chemical and physical properties. The knowledge of the behaviour of these characteristics to the application of heat, addition of salts, acids, oils and spices, so essential to any method of food preparation, is also important.

Similarly, knowing what food is suited to what style of service; which flavours blend together best, and how to combine them, are the crux of a customer's acceptability of the food.

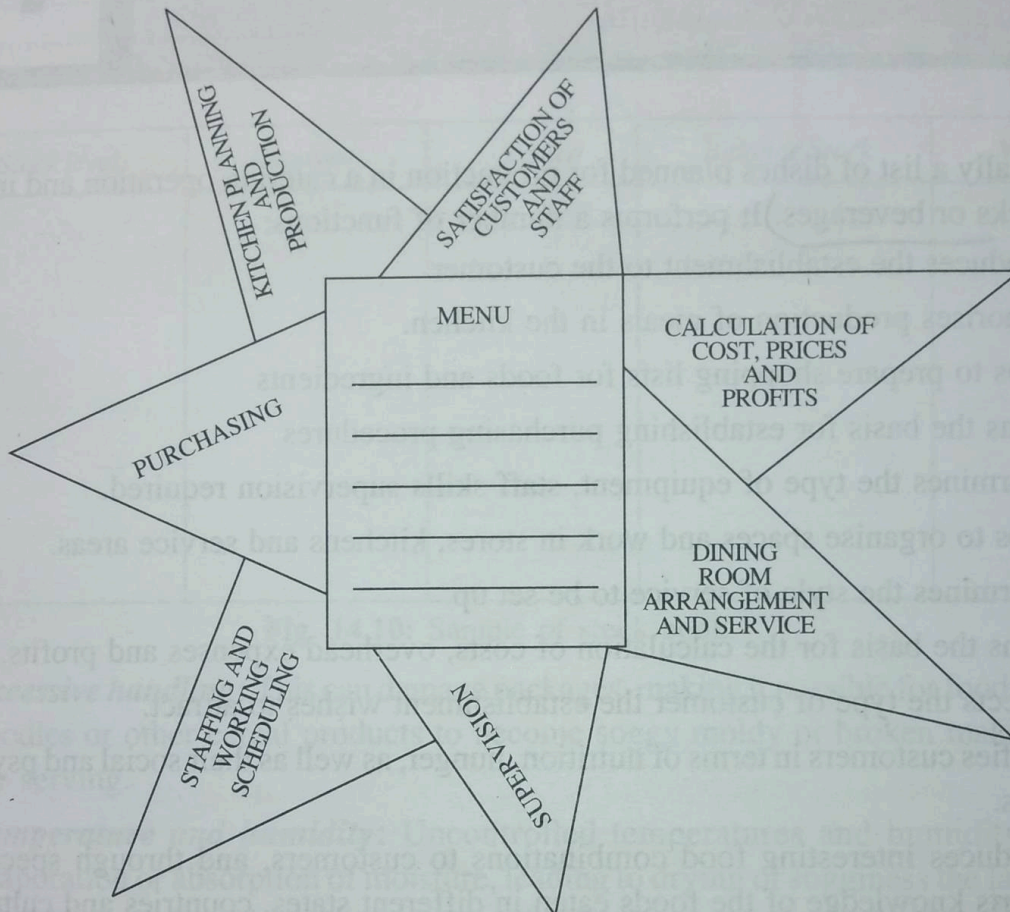
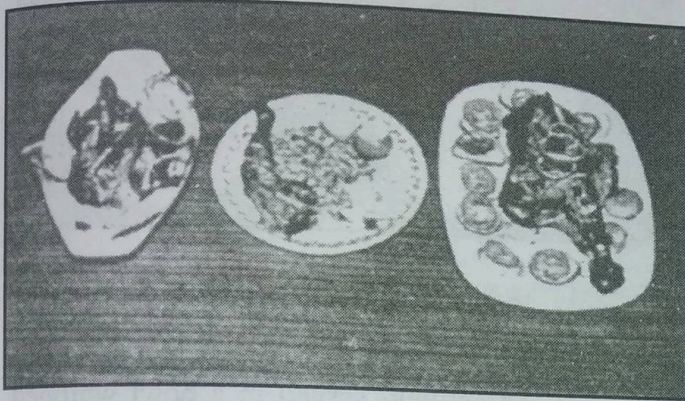


Fig. 15.1: Menu the core of all food preparation and service activity.

- **Knowledge of aesthetic food presentation:** Whatever may be the colour, taste and flavour of a meal, its appearance on the plate or in the display case determines customer choice. Plate 8(a-n) illustrates different ways in which simple foods can be presented to catch the eye of the customer. Equipped with this knowledge the menu planner can introduce a variety of form and colour in menus to attract the customers.
- **Knowledge of the customer:** It is vital for the menu planner to be familiar with the food expectations of the customer. A general idea of his food preferences or favourites, physiological requirements, paying power, social standing, and the reasons for eating out are essential for achieving customer satisfaction.

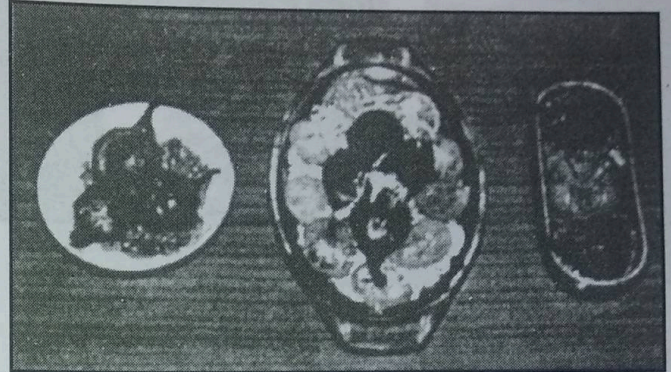
People eat outside their homes for a number of different reasons, and each one affects their choice of food at a particular time. For instance, office goers stopping for a quick lunch would prefer light inexpensive meals, while an executive who is entertaining would choose more elaborately presented items. Similarly, captive customers, such as children in a boarding school, or people in an old age home will necessarily eat from a less selective menu, because they have no choice but to

eat what is prepared in the institutional kitchen. Again, people travelling long distances look forward to food, because other activities or movements on a train or an aeroplane are restricted. The menus should therefore be interesting in terms of providing variety in form, colour and flavour. In addition, they need to be easy to serve and eat while travelling.

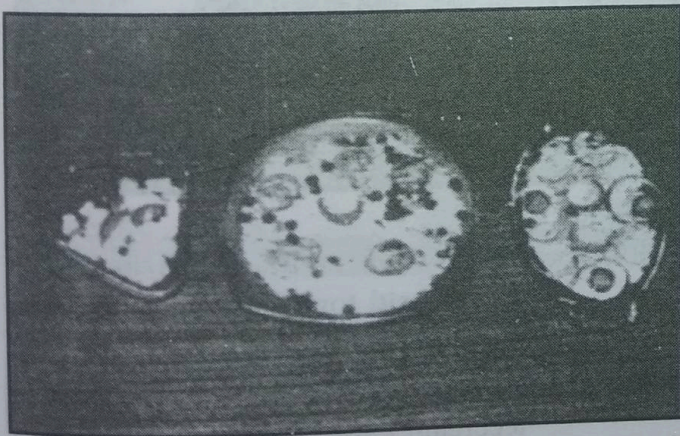


8(a): Presentation of Tandoori Chicken.

- L. Whole chicken showing incomplete garnishing, although size of dish is adequate for service.
- C. Well presented chicken platter for one person.
- R. The dish is too large for quantity of chicken presented.



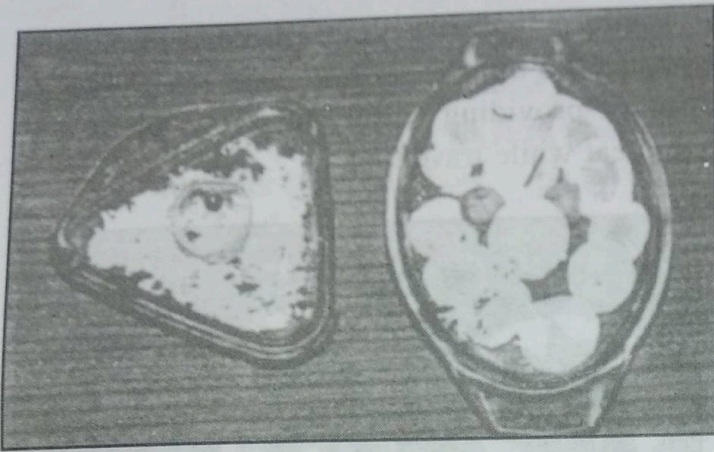
- 8(b):**
- L. Stuff brinjal attractively served with grilled tomato providing contrast in colour the shape and colour of dish adds to the attractiveness.
 - C. Same dish garnished well with cabbage, tomato slices and sour cream make a striking difference with presentation.
 - R. Stuffed brinjal served covered with thick gravy.



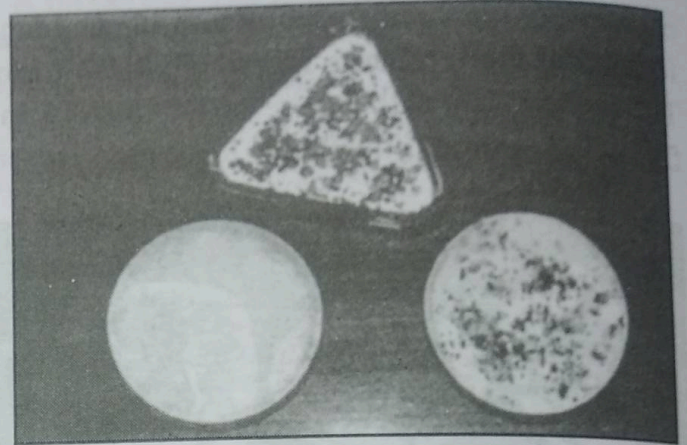
- 8(c):**
- L. Pulao served with roasted potato cubes and tomato segments.
 - C. Pulao platter with stuffed tomato centre and slices.
 - R. Same as centre but garnished with red radishes in addition. The shapes of dishes change the appearance and acceptability of the preparation.



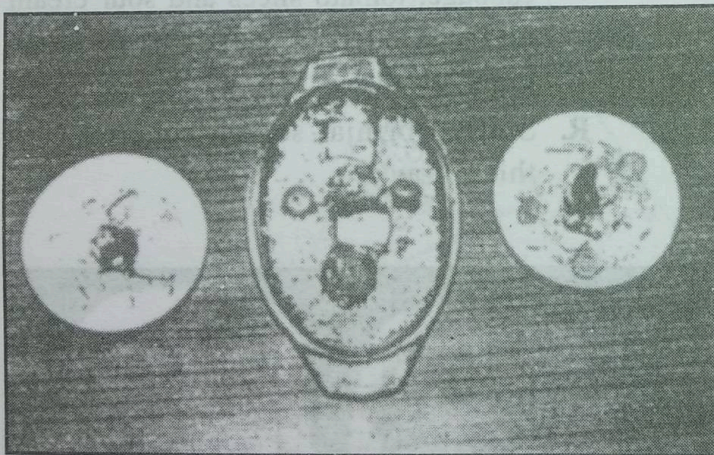
- 8(d):**
- L. Whole Naan served overlapped. Attractive but difficult to serve.
 - R. Diagonally sliced pieces of Naan, easy to handle as required.



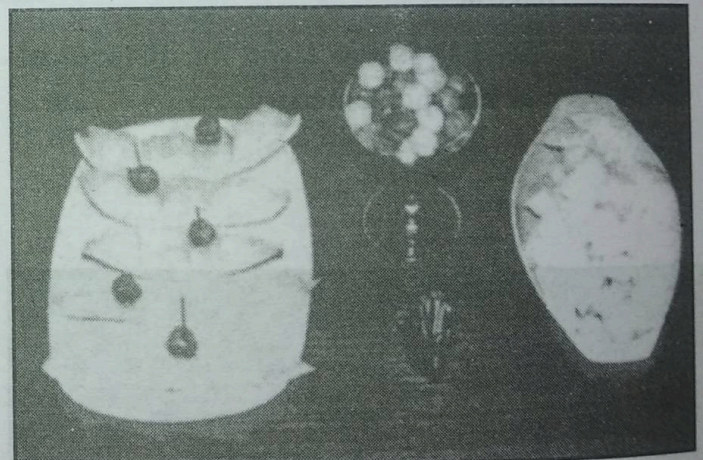
- 8(e): L.** Scrambled egg with tomato and green spices. Not attractively garnished.
- R.** Boiled sliced egg and tomato. Could be improved by garnish of green coriander and a mayonnaise or mint sauce.



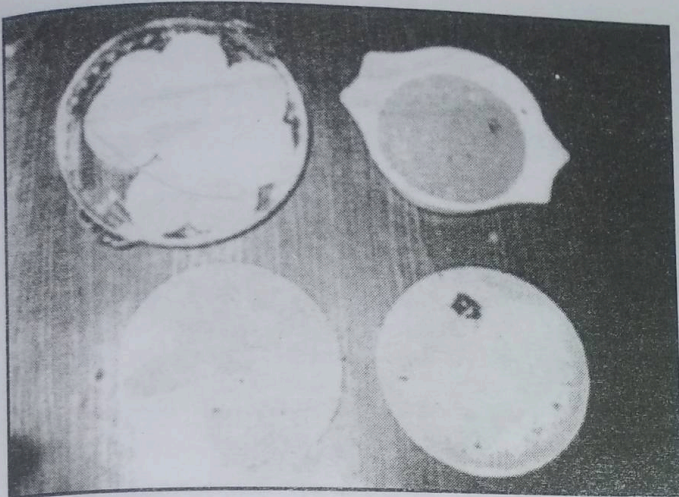
- 8(f): Top.** Raita attractively garnished.
- L.** Plain yoghurt could be more attractively served in a bowl whipped and garnished with chopped mint or coriander.
- R.** Garnished with spices and green coriander.



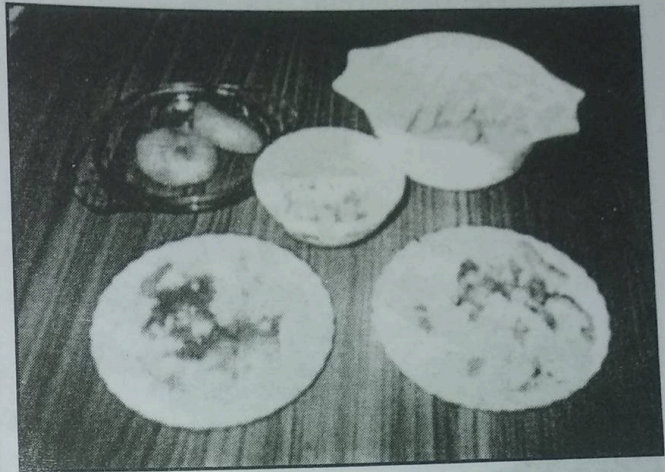
- 8(g): L.** Paneer pieces served with a touch of tomato and curd sauce and fried raisins and onions.
- C.** The dish scrambled and cooked in curd leaving few large pieces for attractiveness. The shape of dish add to the presentation.
- R.** Additional garnish with tomato slices would have looked more attractive on a bed of lettuce or shredded cabbage.



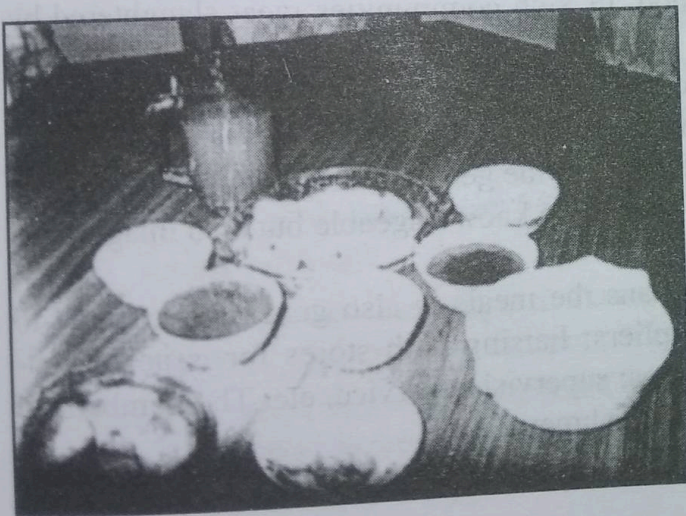
- 8(h): L.** Wedges of melon garnished with cherry held together with toothpicks.
- C.** Melon and watermelon make an attractive starter to a meal, served in icecream cups.
- R.** Piece of watermelon could be made more attractive in a deeply coloured dish.



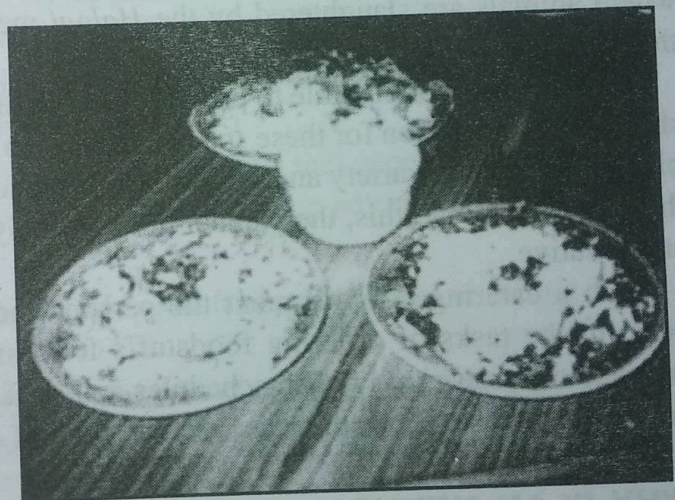
8(i): Top. Platter of steamed 'Idlis' served with shambar, eaten as snack or meal
Bottom. 'Idli' served as snack. **Left.** Served with shambar poured on top. **Right.** The 'Idli' served with spicy coconut chutney.



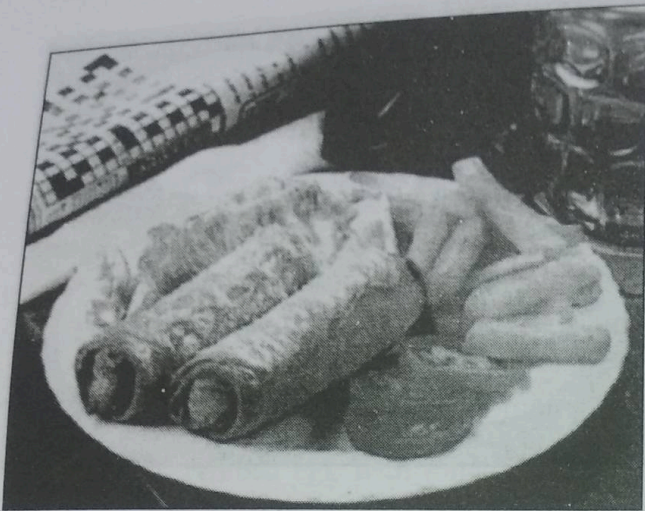
8(j): 'Chaat' top displayed for self-service.
Bottom. Items of prepared chaat.



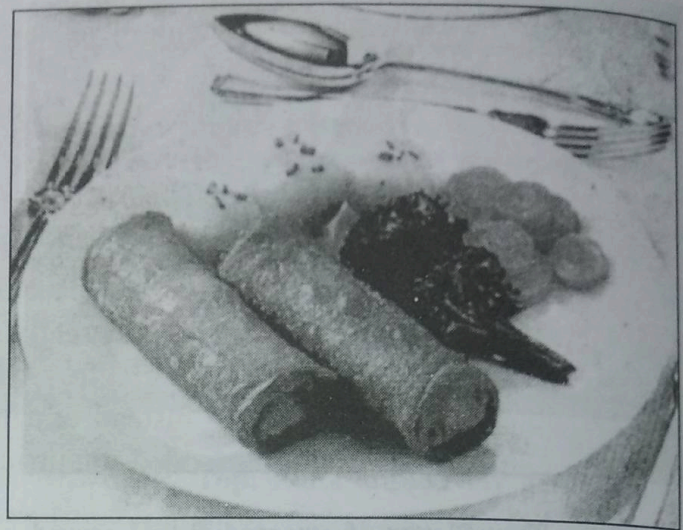
8(k): 'Chatt' ready for self-service.



8(l): L. Pulao served with roasted potato fingers and brown onions.
 C. Pulao platter with shredded capsicum and onion slices.
 R. Same as centre but garnished with spiced curd and roasted onions. The curd changes the texture appearance and flavour of the pulao.



8(m): Chicken rolls served as a 'meal platter'



8(n): Chicken rolls served as a 'snack' with potato fingers

Also, people have very strong likes and dislikes because of cultural, religious or traditional reasons. For instance, in India people have taboos regarding the eating of beef; most people are vegetarians, and some religious orders do not permit even the consumption of onions and garlic. In muslim countries people abstain from pork consumption and any meat eaten is bought from shops where animals are slaughtered by the *Halaal* method. In Sikh communities meat slaughtered by the *Jhatka* method is acceptable (Glossary).

While it is not possible to provide for each and every customer's needs, menu planning which shows a consideration for these special needs is to be commended. It is therefore, a challenge to the planner to provide variety and interest in a meal according to the general needs and expectations of the customer. To do this, the planner does not only have to be knowledgeable but also imaginative and creative.

In a catering establishment the person who plans the meals is also generally required to perform the tasks of ordering foodstuffs from suppliers; liaising with stores for issue of non-perishables; preparing kitchen schedules and staff rotas; supervising service, etc. The number and nature of the tasks vary with the size and type of establishment.

WHY PLAN MENUS?

Planning menus becomes essential when food has to be bought, prepared and served in large quantities to people of varying tastes and requirements. The advantages gained from planning are:

- (a) *Provision of provide appetising, nourishing and attractive meals to customers at a fair price.* This is only possible if the meals are planned in advance, so that a price advantage can be obtained by buying seasonal foods and in quantities which carry discounts.
- (b) *Planning helps to determine requirements accurately.* Food buying can thus be controlled through advance buying, because quantities are calculated beforehand.
- (c) *Planning ensures that food is not wasted* because any leftovers can be creatively incorporated in the next day's menu which is already planned out.
- (d) *Time and effort spent is minimised* on haphazard ordering, shopping and receiving of food materials and their issue to user departments.

- (e) *Preparation and cooking can be better organised* because ingredients needed for subsequent meals are known in advance. For instance, garnishes can be prepared along with salads at one time. Chopping and cutting separately for each dish is avoided. Time is not lost in waiting for ingredients, as they are already purchased issued and ready for use.
- (f) *Carefully planned menus save fuel and cut wastage* through excessive leftovers. For example, milk may be heated together for the preparation of hot beverages, setting of curds, or for preparing cottage cheese, instead of placing the milk in three containers and heating small quantities separately. Similarly, planned menus can help to save on quantities and ingredients, e.g. leftover curds may be added to boiling milk for making cottage cheese or *paneer* instead of vinegar or lemon juice. Also, the whey obtained need not be wasted, but added to curries, soups, etc.
- (g) *Planned menus help to note favourite dishes and identify those which did not sell too well.* From these records, decisions regarding the number of portions of each item to be prepared for service can be made. Menus too can be planned keeping customer preferences in mind.
- (h) *Planned menus offer a wider menu choice according to season,* because seasonal foods can be introduced in advance. This becomes very restricted when preparation has to be done on the basis of spot decisions.
- (i) *Advance planning removes a lot of anxiety* for the planner and enables clear-cut instructions to be given to staff thus creating harmony at work.
- (j) *Work goes on according to plan:* If the planner cannot come to work one day. This ensures that the customer is not disappointed.
- (k) *Meal planning helps accurate calculation of food costs* and inclusion of items that can be profitably sold. It also becomes easier to fix selling prices in advance for information of the customer.
- (l) *Planning takes care of price fluctuations* and prevents frequent changes in selling prices on menu displays that can put off customers.

Planning menus is thus an important activity for every food service operation and catering managers need to ensure procedures which can determine how best and profitably it can be done.

PLANNING MENUS

Before actually writing down any item on the menu, every planner must consider the basic factors important to the *situation* and the *customer* for whom the menu is being planned.

The Situation

The basic factors to be considered in terms of the situation would be:

- (a) Location of the establishment in relation to the market.
- (b) Space available for storing foods in wholesome condition.
- (c) Size of kitchen and service areas.
- (d) Equipment available in kitchen and service areas.
- (e) Number of staff and their skills.

- (f) Policy of the establishment in terms of:
- What type of customers it wishes to attract. This will be basically determined by the pricing policy, in that the higher the prices, the richer the customer and the higher his power to pay.
 - The extent to which the establishment wishes to invest on catering, in comparison to other areas of expenditure like furniture, decor, equipment, and so on.
 - Degree of automation or labour-saving devices desired.
 - Personnel in terms of trained staff or cheaper unskilled labour.
 - Profit margins.
 - Type of service, i.e. cafeteria, restaurant, home delivery only and the like.

The Customer

Customers are likely to represent people of varying ages, activities, occupations, physiological status and sex. They would also belong to various religious and cultural backgrounds, some perhaps, having rigid food habits. The following discussion will illustrate how the various requirements of customers forms the basis for menu planning. Some menus are being planned and discussed to provide examples only.

Planning for school children: If a menu has to be planned for school children living in a boarding school, the factors to consider would be:

Nutrition: School children generally spend a lot of physical energy at play. They are also at various stages of growth and so their general nutritional needs would have to be considered while planning their meals. Some children may have special requirements because of sickness or injury or hyper activity. The considerations would therefore place emphasis on planning balanced diets suitable to their needs. Table 15.1 gives the recommended energy and nutritional requirements of children at different ages.

TABLE 15.1: Daily recommended energy and nutritional requirements of children at different ages according to body weight (Adapted from Narasimha Rao B.S. et al., 1989)

Category	Age (yrs)	Body (kg)	Energy (K cal)	Protein (g)	Fat (g)	Calcium (mg)	Iron (mg)	Vit C (mg)	Folic Acid (μ g)
Children	1-3	12.1	1125	23	-	-	12	40	100
	4-6	18.2	1600	31	20	400	18	40	100
	7-9	25.2	1925	41	15	400	25	40	100
Boys	10-12	33.5	2150	53	15	600	28	40	100
	13-15	46.8	2400	71	15	600	43	40	100
	16-18	56.1	2600	79	15	600	50	40	100
Girls	10-12	35.0	1950	55	15	600	20	40	100
	13-15	47.8	2050	67	15	600	28	40	100
	16-18	49.7	2050	65	15	600	30	40	100

Note : On a mixed cereal diet with 6-8 servings of fruits and vegetables with emphasis on green, dark green and yellow vegetables, the requirements of children for other vitamins and minerals will be met.

Eating Patterns: Children are generally restless and do not like to spend too much time at the table eating. Besides, they feel rushed in the morning because they must reach their class on time. So menus have to provide dishes that are quick to eat, and yet satisfying. Perhaps something they

can carry out of the dining hall without messing up themselves, such as a hamburger or a salad roll; or stuffed parathas, pancakes, and whole fruit would be in order. Children also tend to get bored with foods easily. So menus need to provide variety in colour, texture, taste and flavour.

Environment: The geographic location and its accompanying climatic and weather conditions are important considerations in planning too. In very dry and hot weather, children lose a lot of body water and salts through perspiration. The menus then would need to introduce extra fluids and salts, because children do not generally like to drink plain water. Colas should be strictly avoided while seasonal fresh juicy fruits and vegetables are in order.

In humid hot climates the feeling is that of stress, lethargy and discomfort, and spirits sag. In such conditions, meals need to provide cool foods like ices, chilled juices and fruits, cold meats, crisp salads, cold soups and other refreshing and nourishing drinks.

In cold climates, on the other hand, extra energy is required to keep warm, and fried crisp foods like croquettes, cutlets, chips, kebabs, samosas or fried rice, pulaos, hot breads and hot beverages and desserts would be the appropriate choices.

Appetite: Children have varying appetites and often prefer snacky meals at frequent intervals, to a few large ones. They need to be tempted to eat by innovative and attractively served dishes or snacks, incorporating foods good for them into items which they like.

Preferences: In general, boys prefer foods with a higher satiety and caloric value than girls of the same age, since their basal as well as energy expenditure is higher. On the other hand, girls are less active, less muscular, and become figure conscious. Therefore, prefer light, frequent but small meals that are more highly spiced.

The menu planner therefore, has to consider all these factors when planning menus for children, in addition to making them cost effective, tempting and profitable. Below are some sample menus for different types of customers indicating the special features considered in planning.

MENU A: A day's menu for a boy's boarding school

Breakfast	Lunch	Tea	Dinner
Egg Buttered toast Milk Fruit	Curry Sauteed vegetable Curd (yoghurt) Chappati Rice	Samosa Milk shake	Spinach Dal Sauteed potatoes Chappati Rice Carrot Halwa

Note: The menu pattern has taken into consideration the following factors:

- (a) The Indian food habits which include a curry, curd, dal preparation (usually consumed in some form at least once a day), an Indian dessert at dinner.
- (b) Boys need nutritional balance provided by foods from all food groups in each meal. Satiety value through a fried snack, egg and halwa take care of protein and extra calories for activities.
- (c) The menu provides in its format, a lot of flexibility, so that different curries, halwas, forms of egg, snacks, fruits and shakes can be provided according to seasonal availability.
- (d) It may be noted that boys do not like salads unless they are incorporated in sandwiches or rolls, which can be introduced as snacks.

MENU B: A day's menu for a girl's hostel

Breakfast	Lunch	Tea	Dinner
Porridge	Curry	Pakorras	Dal
Egg (Poached)	Raita	Chutney	Sauteed vegetable
Buttered toast	Salad	Tea	Chappati
Milk	Chappati		Rice
Fruit	Pickle		Halwa/Kheer

Note : The difference in Menus A and B is chiefly in the provision of spicy preparations like 'raitas', pickle and assorted pakoras (glossary). Also salads and egg have been provided in preference to fried forms. The menu is just as flexible and can be varied according to the mood of the customer and the availability of ingredients.

It may be noted that Menus A and B are samples only and if a cyclic menu is prepared which is the normal practice in hostels, then specific dishes may be written out for several days in advance.

MENU C: A day's menu for inmates of a home for the handicapped

Breakfast	Midmorning	Lunch	Tea	Dinner
Bread roll	Fruit	Mixed pulaos	Cake or	Dal
or		or	Sandwich	Seasonal vegetable
Stuffed paratha		Stuffed chappati	Tea	Rice
Milk/Coffee		Curd		Chappati
				Set custard

Note: Factors considered in planning are:

- (a) Limited fried foods because the level of activity is less than in normal people, varying according to the handicap.
- (b) The consistency of foods is not very 'runny' so that they can be handled easily. Food is also served in large pieces or in forms which can be easily held.
- (c) Dishes planned are attractive and meal time as looked forward to more than by normal people who can move about freely and perform any number of interesting activities.
- (d) Variety can be incorporated by mixing pureed green vegetables into doughs, or providing different stuffing for parathas and rolls.
- (e) Dishes have been planned for minimum use of table appointments. Where a number of items are planned it is expected to be served as a plated meal.

MENU D: A conference lunch menu attended by delegates from different countries

Stuffed capsicum and Tomatoes
Cottage cheese/Meat ball curry
Mixed vegetable pulao
Pineapple raita
Green salad
Carrot mould with cream
Coffee

The factors taken into consideration are:

- (a) The dishes planned are generally acceptable to persons from all countries. The menu accomplishes this because the starter and salad are two items which are eaten all over the world. The curry selected is familiar to most persons as meat balls served with spaghetti or in tomato sauce are common to most. Cottage cheese curry provides vegetarians with an equivalent substitute for meat curry. Indian curries are relished by

people from all countries. Rice is a common, cereal in most countries and people look forward to tasting oriental flavours in the form of *pulaos*. Pineapple raita would provide the familiar flavour of fruit yoghurt while acting as a suitable accompaniment to the rice. Carrot halwa moulded and served with cream introduces a new form of pudding to foreign palates, while being relished by most Indians.

- (b) The composition of the menu allows for quick service between conference sessions.
- (c) Colour, texture, flavour and attractiveness is taken care of through providing different heights on a buffet table during service.
- (d) There is very little scope for over spicing. For those who wish to add more spices, these could be placed on the table, in the form of chutneys and pickles.

While the menu accounts for tastes and habits of people from all over the world, the Indian touch that many delegates look forward to is not absent.

MENU E: Canteen Menu

Special for the Day—Pizza	₹ 15 a slice	Remarks
Assorted Fried Snack (with Chutney)	12 per plate	Prices subject to change according to market fluctuations within a particular (time frame)
Sandwiches	10 per pack	
Fruit Cake	15 a piece	
Tea	8 per cup	
Coffee	15 per cup	
Cold drinks	15 per bottle or can	

Factors considered in planning are:

- (a) Habits of the customers—for instance, if it is an office canteen, hot beverages will be demanded all day.
- (b) Purchasing power of the customer.
- (c) Favourites among customers especially included in the day's special.
- (d) Easy to serve in disposables.
- (e) Satiety value and value for money.
- (f) Minimum on the spot preparation.
- (g) Items which will provide attractive displays.

The above menus provide only an insight into the art of menu planning for particular situations. No amount of descriptions or illustrations can replace the results of the actual experiences of menu planners with their particular situations and customer. Each category requires initiative, creativity and imagination with consideration for physical, psychological and social requirements.

The objectives of a good menu plan that meets nutritional requirements of school children (Menus A and B) can be completely marred if children from the boarding school go out and eat in a cafe or canteen. As seen from Menu E, canteens need not always focus attention on nutritional value. This is because even if they did, children may not make the right buying choices.

While menu planning has its advantages, it also requires a lot of time thought and effort to be effective. The effort of every planner, therefore, should be to minimise the time spent on other activities. In order to do this it is a good policy to plan meals several days ahead, as this helps to:

- (i) Prepare market orders in advance and reduce last minute purchasing. It also allows enough time to shop when markets are least crowded.
- (ii) Helps to control costs through cheaper buying when larger amounts are needed for a week's supply as against daily shopping.

With practice and experience, menu planning too can become a less and less time consuming, and more effective activity.

WRITING MENUS

1. Use a pencil to write menus so that it is easier to erase an item if changed, till the plan is finalised.
2. Keep handy:
 - (a) An indexed updated file of standard recipes giving ingredients and methods, portions, costs, selling price per portion and gross profit percentage. It will help to include the name of alternate cost equivalent ingredients for use in the recipe in case of lack of availability of some ingredient. An index number for cross reference is necessary for locating and consulting other pages in the file.
 - (b) Lists of prices of seasonal and other foods, updated for ready reference.
 - (c) Lists of substitute foods in the form of exchange lists.
 - (d) Ideas for use of leftovers, developed with experience, and in consultation with chefs.
 - (e) List of the most profitable dishes.
 - (f) Lists of foods in stock at the time of planning in terms of leftovers, prepared and raw foods. It is useful to have stock lists in order, that will enable earlier stocks to be planned into menus first before fresh ones are used.
 - (g) List of staff on leave so that skills of existing staff can be kept in mind before placing an item on the menu.
 - (h) Lists of popular food items and combinations.
3. With the above available aids and the basic considerations in mind, menus can be written out with names of dishes in the following order:
 - (a) Starter/soup
 - (b) Main dish
 - (c) Side dish(es)
 - (d) Cereal preparation
 - (e) Salad
 - (f) Accompaniments
 - (g) Dessert
 - (h) Hot beverage

The sample menus A and B in Fig. 15.2 indicate this order listing the dishes as planned.

A	B
Egg Drop Tomato Soup/Veg soup	Grilled Stuffed Tomatoes
Tandoori Chicken	Baked Fish/Cheese/Paneer/Tofu
Paneer/Kofta curry	Sauted Peas and Corn
(meat or vegetable balls)	Sunshine Salad
Pulao (fried rice)	Garlic Bread
Naan (Indian bread)	Steamed Chocolate Pudding
Onion Tomato Salad	
Kulfi (Indian ice-cream with nuts)	Coffee

Fig. 15.2: Menus showing the order in which dishes are written-out.

4. Menus must be written in a form that is simple, legible and attractive to draw the customer's attention.
5. Names of dishes should be clearly understood. If unfamiliar names are used, description should follow the names (see Fig. 15.2) so that the customer knows exactly what he is ordering.
6. Sauces and accompaniments create a feeling of getting good value for money, and must be indicated on the menu. These may be written as a separate item, or along with the dish for which it is the special accompaniment.
7. Care is necessary in word selection and correct spelling of dishes, particularly if they are written in a foreign language. For example *Half-Fried Chicken* will convey a different meaning to the customer than *Fried Half Chicken*.
8. Portion sizes must be indicated along with prices as shown so that the customer does not feel cheated in Menu E (p. 209), In some cafeterias the price is expected to indicate the portion size, but this is sometimes deceptive and damages consumer relations.

Menus can be written in many different ways according to the purpose for which they are intended. In food services where a waiter style of service is offered, the menu is generally presented in the form of a folder. This introduces the establishment to the customer and therefore gives information other than the list of dishes and prices. It covers the address, telephone numbers, service timing and other relevant information.

In a canteen, lunchroom or cafeteria, the menu would probably be displayed as a list of items with prices on a board. In smaller establishments a blackboard and chalk may be used to write the date and menu items offered every day, including a *special for the day*.

On formal occasions small menu cards may be placed in front of each guest cover for letting guests know in which order items will be served. Such menus generally indicate the set menu ordered by the host. Each card also carries the guest name on it so that each guest is directed to his proper position at the table vis-a-vis the host(ess).

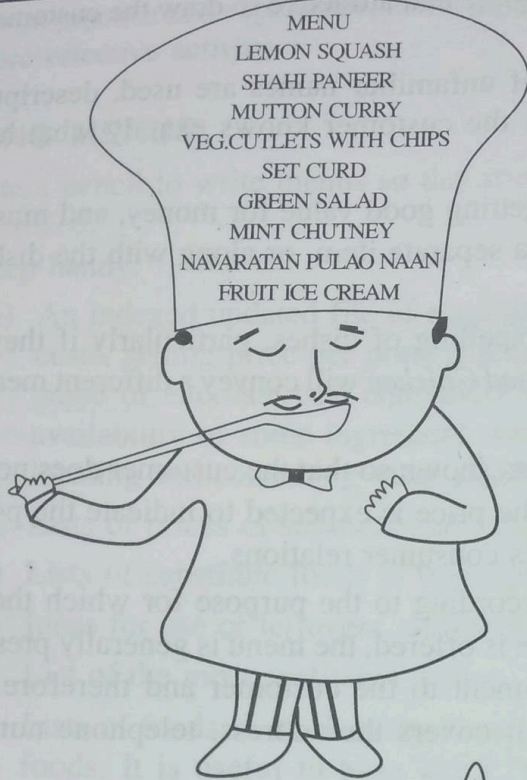
In institutions like hostels, hospitals, homes, menus are charted out for a week or ten days in advance, according to a meal plan varying from a three to five meals a day routine. This plan would include breakfast, lunch and dinner, with some institutions providing something at tea and or bedtime also. Some establishments may even provide a beverage, fruit or midmorning snack.

In institutional menus, it is not the practice to indicate prices or portions because these establishments are generally non-profit making, and the price for meals is never paid by the customers or inmates at the point of service. In hospitals meals are charged at a flat rate and billed to the patient at the time of discharge. Attendant meals are available if requested or else cafés and sandwich bars are provided where they can buy food and drink of choice.

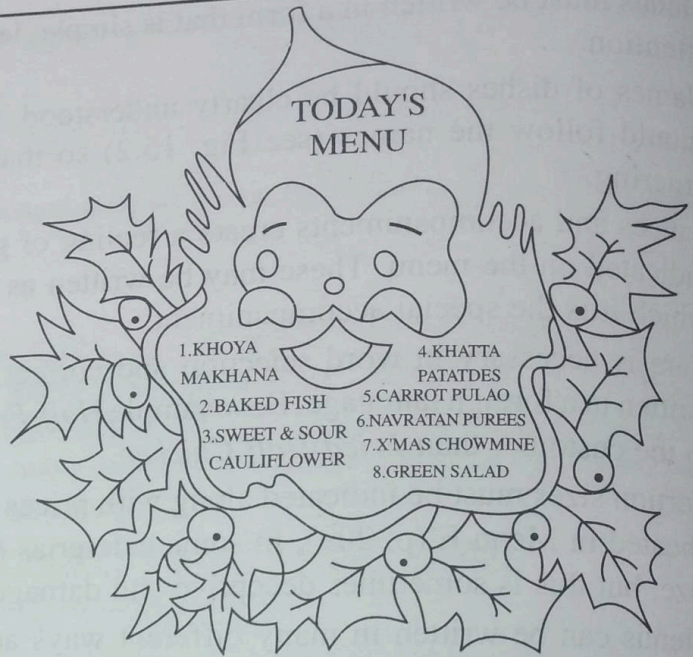
The decoration and colour used on menu cards should blend with the general decor and nature of the establishment. It should be attractive and pleasing, and not detract from the items listed. If a menu card is written out for a special occasion it should convey the mood of the occasion as shown in Plate 9.

TYPES OF MENU

Menus are basically of three types: (a) *A la Carte*; (b) *Table d'hôte*; and (c) A combination of these two. These are briefly discussed:



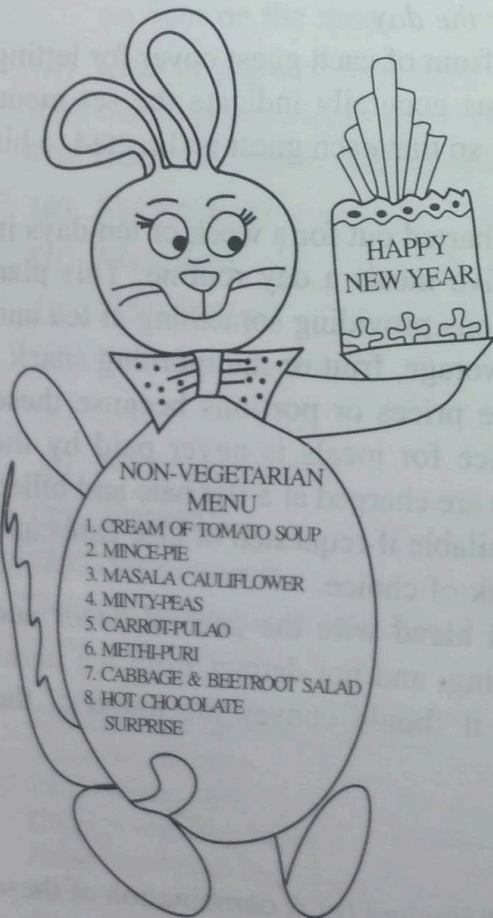
MENU
 LEMON SQUASH
 SHAHI PANEER
 MUTTON CURRY
 VEG.CUTLETS WITH CHIPS
 SET CURD
 GREEN SALAD
 MINT CHUTNEY
 NAVARATAN PULAO NAAN
 FRUIT ICE CREAM



TODAY'S MENU

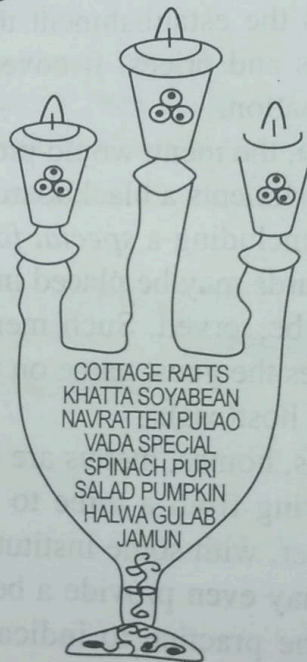
1.KHOYA	4.KHATTA
MAKHANA	PATATDES
2.BAKED FISH	5.CARROT PULAO
3.SWEET & SOUR	6.NAVRATAN PUREES
CAULIFLOWER	7.X'MAS CHOWMINE
	8.GREEN SALAD

MERRY X' MAS

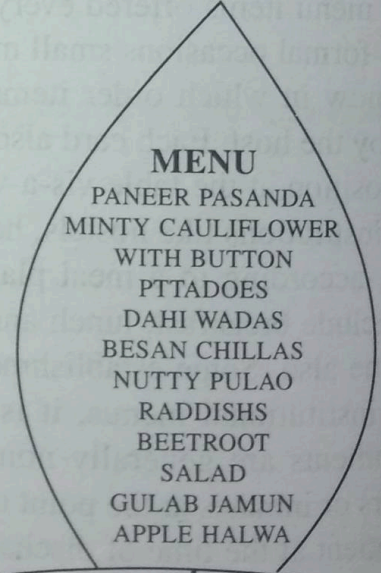


NON-VEGETARIAN MENU

1. CREAM OF TOMATO SOUP
2. MINCE-PIE
3. MASALA CAULIFLOWER
4. MINTY-PEAS
5. CARROT-PULAO
6. METHI-PURI
7. CABBAGE & BEETROOT SALAD
8. HOT CHOCOLATE SURPRISE



COTTAGE RAFTS
 KHATTA SOYABEAN
 NAVRATTEN PULAO
 VADA SPECIAL
 SPINACH PURI
 SALAD PUMPKIN
 HALWA GULAB
 JAMUN



MENU

PANEER PASANDA
 MINTY CAULIFLOWER
 WITH BUTTON
 PTTADOES
 DAHI WADAS
 BESAN CHILLAS
 NUTTY PULAO
 RADDISHS
 BEETROOT
 SALAD
 GULAB JAMUN
 APPLE HALWA

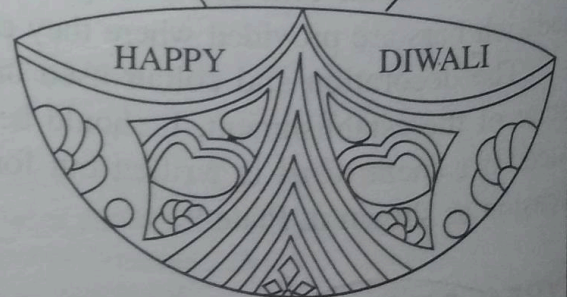


Plate 9: Menus conveying the mood of the occasion.

A la Carte Menu

This menu is basically a choice menu and generally offers choices of dishes or items to customers under ten food categories as shown in Fig. 15.3.

Starters	Soups	Main Dishes	Side Dishes	Cereal Preparations
Jal Jeera	Rasam	Fish	Vegetables cooked	Chappati
Egg Mayonnaise	Mushroom	Chicken	in various ways.	Paratha
Prawn Cocktail	Tomato	Mutton	.	Naan
Assorted Snacks			.	
Assorted Salads	Chicken	Cottage Cheese	.	Rice preparations
Stuffed Tomatoes	Goulash	Stews		Breads
Spring Rolls	French Onion	Legumes		Puris
Spiced potatoes	Med-Veg	Vegetables		.
.	.	.		.
.	.	.		.
Salads	Desserts	Sandwiches	Snacks	Beverages
Tomato Onion	Fruits	Ribbon	Fried	Tea
Spring Salad	Ice-Cream	Chutney	Sandwiches	Coffee
Green Salad	Souffles	Salad	Grilled	Buttermilk
Beetroot Radish	Pies	Chicken	Baked	Hot chocolate
Salad	.		Steamed sauteed	
Russian Salad	Custards	Double decker	.	Milk shakes
Waldorf Salad	.	Club	.	Juices
Mixed Tossed Salad.		Scandinavian	.	Sodas
.
.
.

Fig. 15.3: Choice categories on an a la carte menu.

The categories in an a la carte menu generally follow a sequence on the menu card, in which the customer would normally select items for the meal. Each dish is priced separately so that a choice can be made according to the taste and purchasing power of the customer.

A la carte menus may range from being limited to a few items in a coffee shop, canteen or cafeteria to being extensive in the case of restaurants providing waiter service. These menus are used chiefly by profit-making establishments, and are suitable for leisurely dining, because the wide choices offered and selected, take longer to process in the kitchen before they can be served. A sample a la carte menu of a food service is given in Plate 10.

The advantage of a la carte menu is that customers can choose any item according to their appetite, mood and purchasing power.

Table d' hôte Menu

Table d' hôte means *table of the host*. This menu is therefore a set menu, in which a number of dishes are planned by the host and food served and offered at a set price. Some establishments especially those located in out of the way places with seasonal customers, such as at hill stations in tropical countries or at places of pilgrimage where worshippers flock together at certain times of

21
ICE CREAMS

Get a taste of that 21 derful feeling!

Available in scoops and take-out
(500 ml. and 1 litre) packs
For the flavour-of-the-month, pick
up our special flyer

Soda Fountain

Ice Cream Sodas
Bubbly and refreshing... such fun
Choose from 9 fizzy flavours

**Milk Shakes
and Ice Cream Shakes**
Rich, creamy and wholesome
In 6 delicious flavours

Outrageous Sundaes
Giant creations in 7 variations

Beverages

Espresso Coffee
Cold Coffee
with Ice Cream
Soda Pop (Cappuccino
and (Cappuccino))
Orange Tang & Lemon Spray

Hot Numbers

Steaming hot and deliciously
welcome

Soups (Chicken/Tomato/French Onion)
Mutton Chop
Shaami Kababs
Fried Fish
Fried Chicken



Pies, Pastries and Desserts

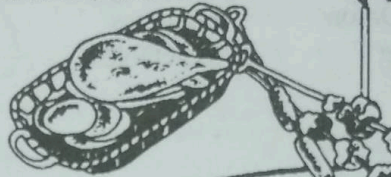
To round off the meal... something sweet

Menu

Breads

Freshly made Indian breads,
served hot off the fire

Naan
Kulcha
Roti (Khameeri, Khasta, Missi)
Parantha (Pudhina, Tandoori)



Tandoori

Succulent specialities of
the North West

Chicken
Seekh Kabab
Mutton Tikka
Mutton Barra Kabab

Barbeque

The zesty flavour of
charcobreilled food

Chicken Shashlik
Paneer Shashlik
Vegetable Shashlik

Hot Shoppe

PIZZAS

Serves one hungry person,
or two fairly hungry friends!

Cheese
Cheese, capsicum,
onions
Chesse, sausage
Cheese, capsicum,
onions, mushrooms
Cheese, sausage,
capsicum, onions

BURGERS

Served with
potatoes and our
own homemade
condiments.

Vegetable Burger
Vegetable Burger with
Cheese
Big Boy Burger
Chili Burger
Cheese Burger
Hot Shoppe Burger
Mahaburger
Mahaburger with Cheese
Sausage Burger

Hot Dogs

Wow! You'll woof them down
All American Hot Dog
Slaw Hot Dog
Cheese Hot Dog
Hot Shoppe Hot Dog

Cold Platters

Delightfully light
and healthy
Preplated Salads
Preportioned
Yoghurt/Raita

Curries

For the adventurous
palate
Pasanda Badaam
Dal Urad

Plate 10: Sample a la Carte menu—Courtesy Nirulas, New Delhi.

the year, follow set menus. Their selling policy is a *take-it-or-leave-it* one, and little or no flexibility is built into these table d'hôte menus. This is used even when catering for travellers as on railways, airlines, etc. A typical table d'hôte menu is served in India in the form of *thali* meals in some establishments and on trains. In the latter, stainless steel trays with sections of various sizes are generally used for serving the different menu items. Similarly, the trayed meals as served on an aircraft are all set menus.

CLUB MENU	RAILWAY MENU
<p><i>Dinner</i></p> <p>Mushroom soup</p> <p>Roast Mutton & Mint Sauce</p> <p>Roast Potato</p> <p>Butter Cabbage</p> <p>Vegetable Cutlet</p> <p>Caramel Custard</p> <p><i>Indian Vegetarian Dinner</i></p> <p>Mushroom Soup</p> <p>Lauki Masala</p> <p>Mutter Mushroom Curry</p> <p>Dal Urad</p> <p>Tandoori Roti</p> <p>Caramel Custard</p> <p>(Courtesy: Delhi Gymkhana Club, New Delhi)</p>	<p><i>Dinner Tray</i></p> <p>(Non-vegetarian)</p> <p>Mutton/Chicken Curry</p> <p>Sautee Potatoes</p> <p>Spinach</p> <p>Curd</p> <p>Salad (Onions and Green Chillies)</p> <p>Rice (boiled)</p> <p>Chappati</p> <p>Papad</p> <p>Pickle</p> <p><i>Vegetarian Tray</i></p> <p>Dal/Kofta Curry</p> <p>Dal</p> <p>Sauteed Potatoes</p> <p>Spinach</p> <p>(Rest same as for non-vegetarian menu).</p> <p>(Courtesy: Northern Railway.</p>
<p>COLLEGE CANTEEN MENU</p> <p>Vegetable Burger</p> <p>Chicken Chowmien</p> <p>Chana Poori</p> <p>Samosa with Chutney</p> <p>Idli with Sambar</p> <p>Cake</p> <p>Tea</p> <p>Coffee</p> <p>Cold drinks</p> <p>(Courtesy: Lady Sri Ram College, New Delhi)</p>	<p>AIRLINE MENU (MEAL)</p> <p>Chicken or Cheese Pattie</p> <p>Salad with French Dressing</p> <p>Pulao (Vegetable or Meat)</p> <p>Cream Cake or Lemon Tart</p> <p>(Courtesy: Indian Airlines)</p>
	<p>COMBINATION MENU</p> <p>Tandoori Choices</p> <p>—Chicken</p> <p>—Seekh Kabab</p> <p>—Mutton Tikka</p> <p>Curries and dal</p> <p>Bread</p> <p>—Naan</p> <p>—Kulcha</p> <p>—Roti</p> <p>—Paratha</p> <p>Ice-creams</p>

Fig. 15.4: Table d'hôte menus with a la carte element built into them.

Note: The combination menu can take the form of a table d'hôte menu with built-in choices to the extent desired.

Gradually table d'hôte menus too are increasingly being planned to provide a little flexibility in the form of at least a choice of soup or beverage. Examples of partly set menus are seen in clubs, hostels, college canteens, etc. where a choice of side dishes or desserts may be offered keeping the main dishes and soup or beverage fixed. Figure 15.4 shows examples of different kinds of table d'hôte and combination menus.

Combination Menu

In some establishments it is common to have a la carte menus with a *Special for the Day* attachment to it. This special may be a set of dishes with an accompaniment, or a plated meal offered in a table d'hôte form at a set price. More and more establishments are now including vegetarian and Chinese dishes on their menus for their customers.

Food service establishments should be able to provide at any time, an alternative to the planned menus, if customers' food habits demand, keeping ethnic preferences in mind. For example, if a customer does not eat eggs, the food service should be able to make an omelette without it. Alternatives could be *besan poora* or *uthapam* in which the egg is substituted by gram flour and a batter prepared, spread thinly on a hot griddle, cooked, folded like an omelette and served. Other dishes can be so prepared using different cereal bases.

Use of Menus

Menus may be used in a number of ways according to the requirements of food service establishments. Since menu planning is a time and effort consuming activity, it is not advisable to change menu plans too frequently. A la carte menus are hardly ever changed since they provide a large choice for the customer anyway. The only reasons for change would be increase in cost prices of dishes which may make some dishes unprofitable to serve; change in tastes of customers who do not demand the dish any longer; or retirement or resignation of the specialist cook preparing some of the listed dish(es). Table d'hôte menus are changed more frequently to provide variety of set menus within the same price range.

Cyclic Menu

In the case of hotels, hospitals, homes and other institutions, menus are planned in advance for periods of time varying from five days to one month. These are then cycled or repeated. Such menus are termed as cyclic menus and are usually combination type menus providing choices within a set frame work.

Menus are generally used cyclically in establishments with captive consumers, whose numbers do not vary appreciably and where tight budget limits prevail. Also the special requirements of these customers are known over a period of time and can be incorporated into the menu as required.

With short-term cycles, however, there is a tendency to produce *menu fatigue*. The customers tend to remember what is served on Mondays, for example, and may look forward to meal only on a favourite menu day. To counteract this a number of methods are adopted.

- (a) Planning is done for an odd number of days, so that the same menu does not fall on the same day of the week, or same date of a month. For example, plans may be made for 5, 7 or 10, days to prevent people associating a particular menu with a particular day of the week.

(b) A general menu structure may be set, but dishes changed to introduce variety. For example, a menu may say 'seasonal vegetable' or 'curried meat' so that the customer does not really know what he is getting. It could be peas on one day, cauliflower on another, and meat curry followed by curried mince or meat balls, and so on. Variations can also be introduced through different methods of cooking the same food. This also provides flexibility to the planner, who can with confidence mix and match foods and flavours according to stocks, availability, budget and special occasions. Figure 15.5 is a cyclic menu for a women's college hostel.

Meal	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
BREAKFAST	Porridge, Bread, (Butter, Jam) Milk/Tea/ Coffee	Idli & Chutney Milk/Tea/ Coffee Fruit	Egg to order Bread, Butter Milk/Tea/ Coffee	Uppama (with peas and nuts) Fruit Milk/ Tea/Coffee	Egg on toast Milk/ Tea/Coffee Fruit	Porridge Cheese on toast Milk/ Tea/Coffee	Paratha (Stuffed) Curd Salad Pickle Tea/Coffee
LUNCH	Curry, Salad Papad/Pickle/ Rice Chappati	Curry Seasonal vegetable, Salad Rice Chappati	Curry, Raita, Fried Rice Chappati Pickle	Curry Seasonal Vegetable Salad, Chappati Rice	Curry Curd Pulao Chappati	Curry Seasonal Vegetable, Salad Chappati/Rice	Biryani Salad Raita Pickle
TEA	Sandwiches Tea	Biscuits Tea	Samosa Tea	Cake Tea	Cutlets Tea	Pakora Tea	Burger Tea
DINNER	Dal Seasonal Vegetables Chappati Rice Fruit Salad	Dal, Seasonal Vegetables Salad Chappati Rice	Soup Pasta Preparation Stewed fruit with custard	Dal, Seasonal Vegetables, Salad Chappati Rice	Soup Pizza Ice-cream	Dal Seasonal Vegetables Salad Chappati Rice	Soup Cutlets Seasonal Vegetables Bread Caramel custard

Fig. 15.5: A 7-day cyclic menu for women's hostel.

Notes:

- All curries, biryanis, pulaos, pizzas, cutlets etc., may include choices between vegetarian and non-vegetarian preparations. It is customary to serve non-vegetarian dishes at least twice a week.
- Sweet is generally served at dinner time when the diners are at ease, at the end of the day, in the above menu it is served every alternative day, but may be twice a week depending on the policy of the establishment.
- Fruit is served at least once a day.
- Salad as often as possible.
- Accompaniments like papad, pickle, etc, are generally offered when no vegetable side dish is prepared, especially at lunch which is a hurried meal.
- Anyone who wishes to have milk at tea time can order it specially.
- Sunday breakfast is usually a heavier meal than on the other days, as people have more time to eat, and generally take breakfast later than usual.

Cyclic menus have a number of advantages:

- (a) Once a basic menu pattern is established, the planner has more time for creative thinking in terms of adjustments that become necessary in case of holidays, special circumstances, staff shortage, delays in deliveries, and so on.
- (b) The staff and work in kitchens and service areas get better organised because future production plans are known.

- (c) Recipes get standardised with repeated preparation, making food service more cost effective for management and customers.
- (d) Work can be equally distributed throughout the day so that tensions are reduced for kitchen staff irrespective of peaks and troughs usual in catering operations.
- (e) Available equipment and skills can be optimally utilised if menus are thoughtfully planned in advance.
- (f) Administrative work involved in ordering and stocking food is reduced, because a single order can be placed indicating timings for deliveries over a season.

Thus, a well planned cyclic menu can be a very effective tool of management in a food service department. It should, however, have a degree of flexibility built into it, which can be made use of to introduce seasonal variations, special requirements (for the handicapped, aged, or sick), and to control wastage.

CONSTRUCTION OF MENUS

A menu needs to be constructed in a systematic manner. It is important to decide on:

- Menu pattern
- Degree of flexibility
- Sensory quality
- Affordability
- Profitability.

Menu pattern: The menu pattern needs to be considered for suitability with respect to the type of customers the establishment wishes to attract in terms of age, sex, economic states, eating out patterns, their likes and dislikes expectations and soon.

The menu pattern should therefore decide on goals that include any or all these factors, and satisfy customer lifestyles and choices.

Degree of flexibility: A decision has to be made with respect to the flexibility to be provided in menus. Fixed menus may also provide alternatives in some items to offer choices to customers. The greater the flexibility the higher the cost since the number of ingredients increase and may be staff requirements too, depending on the choices offered and demand.

Sensory quality: It is important to ensure that whatever is offered on the menu is actually attractive to the customer in terms of colour, texture, flavour and taste. Often items are reordered on subsequent visits if the quality is good. Aesthetically, colours should blend on the plate served. In planning meals it helps to write down the main dish first and plan the side dishes around it.

Affordability: The purchasing power of the customer needs to be kept in mind while planning menus. If the customer cannot afford a dish, he will not order it.

Profitability: All items cannot satisfy all customers but what is important is that on average the establishment should make a profit in the business.

After constructing menus they need to be checked vertically and horizontally in case of cyclic or weekly non-cyclic menus, to ensure that the same food item or dish does not appear consecutively on two or more days. It must not have the same item used twice in the same meal, nor on the same day. For example, avoid using mutton for lunch and dinner on the same day, or using potato for lunch as well as tea snacks.

The aim of every planner should be to create menus that will be fairly consistent in their quality characteristics, costs and therefore selling prices from day to day. To do this, seasonal and price fluctuations can be taken care of by selecting cheaper side dishes for expensive main dishes and vice versa, while at the same time complementing the main dish in flavour, taste, colour and texture. When choices are planned, the dishes chosen should be comparable in the *value for money* that they provide, and in other aspects as necessary for particular customer requirements. Variations can be provided with the use of different cooking methods, seasonings or garnishings.

A good principle to follow is to list the main dishes for all the days first to avoid repetitions, then follow the five steps to construct the rest of the menu as shown in Fig. 15.6.

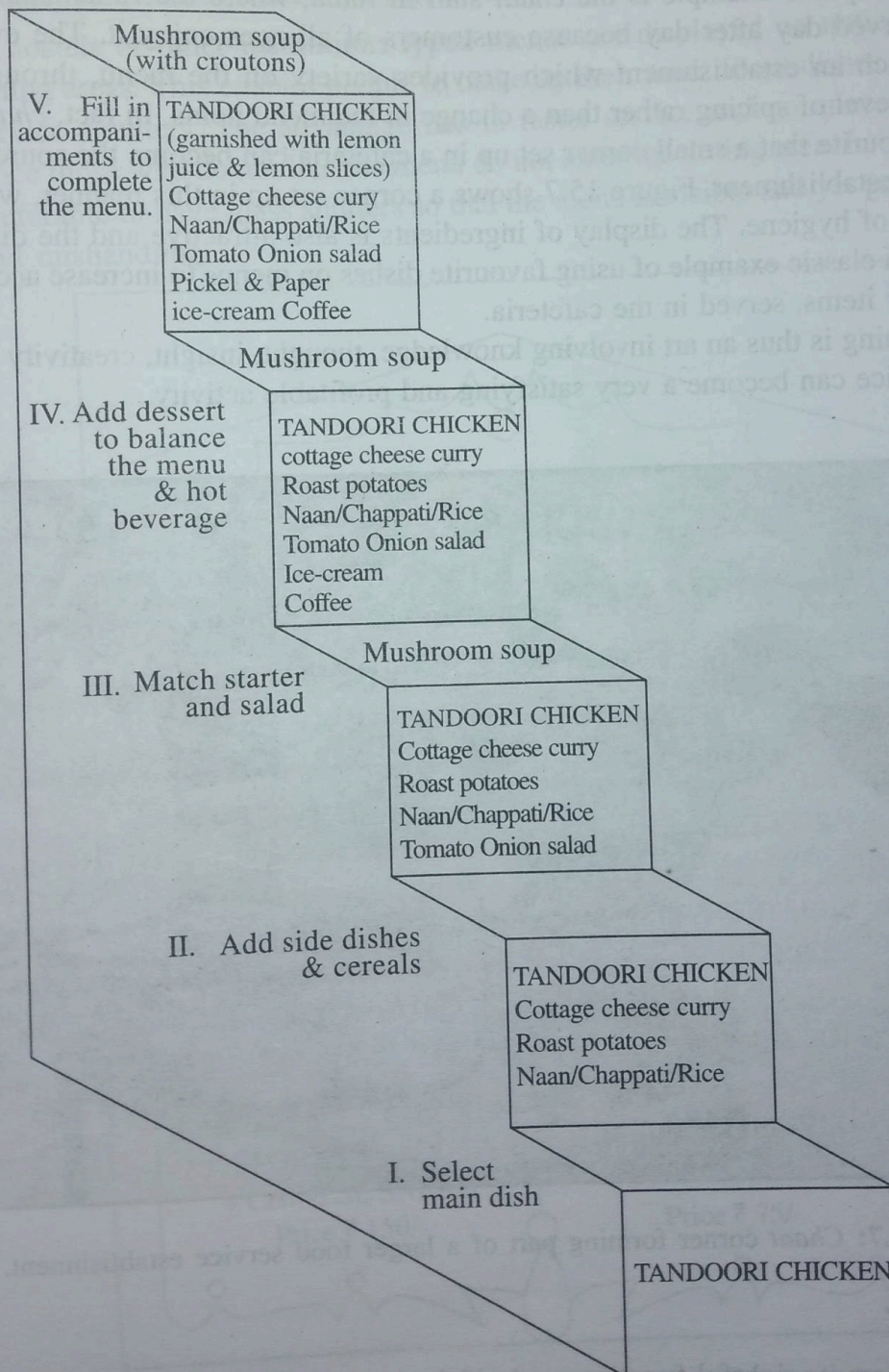


Fig. 15.6: Steps in constructing a dinner menu.

Selection of desserts should generally relate to the main course of the menu. If the latter is light, the dessert chosen can be rich, and vice versa. Desserts may be fruity, cooked puddings (hot or cold), creamy such as ice-creams, souffles, custards, kheers, or based on cakes, gelatin or pies, to add satiety value, depending on the rest of the menu.

While there are meal times established for main meals, all food service establishments may not necessarily plan for full course meals. Small cafeterias, canteens, kiosks, mobile vans or vendors may cut down on menu items and provide plated meals, snacks and beverages. Such menus are becoming more and more popular as people want a bite between meals, when in company or while travelling. In addition, specialty menus which do not require to change are planned on popular demand. An appropriate example is the *chaat* stall in India, where the same *chaat* (glossary) is prepared and served day after day because customers of all ages enjoy it. The evidence of the popularity of such an establishment which provides variety on the menu, through changes in ingredients and level of spicing rather than a change in the menu items. In fact, *chaat* of any kind is such a hot favourite that a small corner set up in a cafeteria can become the source of customer attraction to the establishment. Figure 15.7 shows a corner set up in this manner, with due regard to the principles of hygiene. The display of ingredients is also attractive and the dish is made on demand. This is a classic example of using favourite dishes on menus to increase acceptability and demand for other items, served in the cafeteria.

Menu planning is thus an art involving knowledge, thought, insight, creativity and initiative, which with practice can become a very satisfying and profitable activity.

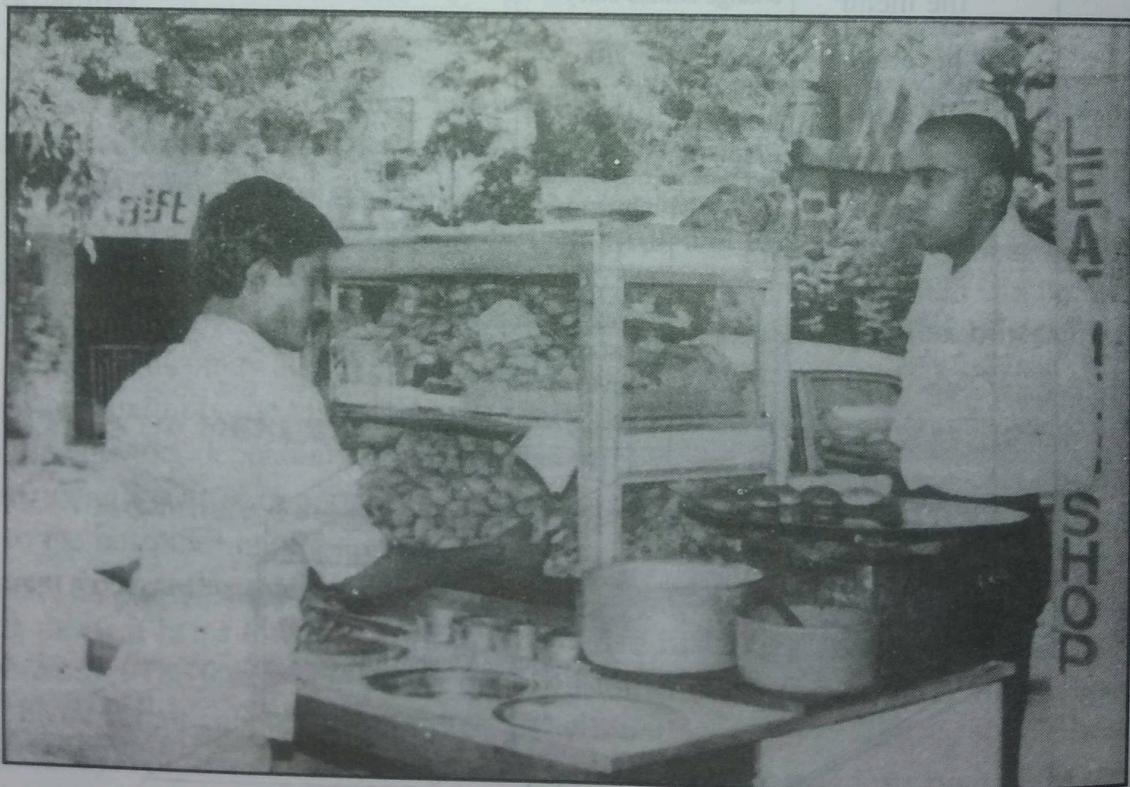


Fig. 15.7: *Chaat* corner forming part of a larger food service establishment.

MENU DISPLAY

The menu can perform its rightful functions only if the customer can see and read it clearly on or before entering a food service establishment. Menus may be displayed in many ways.

- On a menu board with the help of plastic letters which can easily be re-arranged to change the name of the dish from day to day. Such a display is neat and clear. Its effect can be enhanced by using contrasts in colour such as white on black or red on white boards.
- In small kiosks, canteens or mobile catering vans, menus are displayed on blackboards written out in chalk. The disadvantage is that chalk can be erased by customers brushing past.
- Printed or neatly typed menus may be inserted in plastic cases and displayed. This method is often followed in coffee shops and cafeterias where a number of customers handle the menu to make their selections.
- In hostels or other institutions typed menus are displayed on notice boards outside dining areas. This enables people to make up their mind about dishes before they go to service counters. The advantage lies in faster service and no unnecessary crowding, since those who do not like the menu do not enter the dining area. In such displays, it is preferable to have glass shutters so that the menu is visible and yet protected from dust and mishandling.



Fig. 15.8: Combination a la carte and table d'hôte menu. (Courtesy: Sunsnade, New Delhi.)



A la carte menu card
(courtesy: Vikram Hotel)



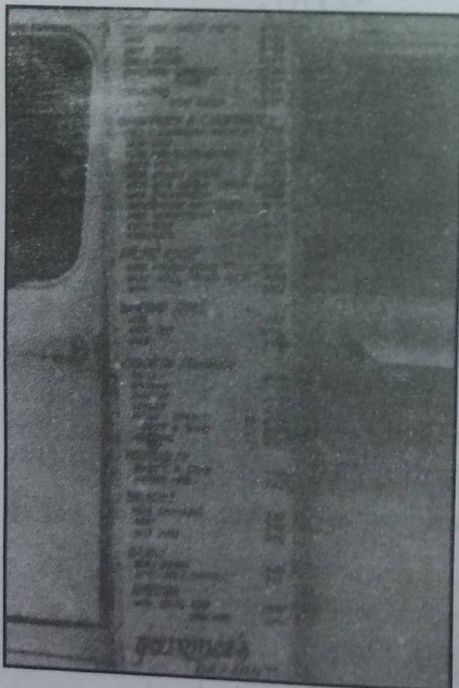
Single item menu



Single item menu
(Market Corner)



Street Vending



A la carte menu on mobile van
(Mobile Catering)



Displayed food items
(Street Vending)

Fig. 15.8: (Contd.) Some methods of displaying menus.

- Printed booklets placed in attractive waterproof folders are a method of presenting menus to customers in restaurants offering extensive choices.
- On formal occasions such as for banquets, small individual menu cards may be typed and placed on menu stands in front of each guest cover. Sometimes separate cards carrying the names of the guest are placed alongside. This enables invitees to be directed to their proper positions on the table without commotion, and also indicates to each diner what courses are being served. In this form of menu display, there are no price or portions printed along with the dishes, as the diners do not have to pay for their meals. Figure 15.8 illustrates some forms in which menus may be displayed.