

## How To Organise An International Dining Event

The following notes are provided to assist with the organisation of an ssu3a International Dining Interest Group meal. They are guidelines only, as every event will be different and unique, but these notes may help you not to overlook something important.

If you feel that there is anything helpful that could be added to these notes, please get in touch with the Webmaster.

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### AT LEAST 4 WEEKS BEFORE

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#### 1. SELECT A RESTAURANT

Collect opinions from members and look at local media to select a likely restaurant. Try to select somewhere that offers different cuisine to recent visits.

#### 2. VISIT THE RESTAURANT

Visit the restaurant, preferably have a meal there, to check that it is OK. While there, ask the manager if they would be able to host an event.

#### 3. DECIDE ON THE MENU ARRANGEMENTS

Set up a meeting with the Manager, and agree the arrangements. Try to keep the arrangements as simple as possible so that it is perfectly clear to diners and to the restaurant, what has been agreed. Consider the following:

- Price: The price may be fixed per head, or each diner could pay for what they order. We usually try agree a good-value fixed price, or at least get a discount on the a-la-cart prices.
- Number of diners: Agree the minimum and/or maximum number of diners the restaurant will cater for. We typically have around 18 diners, +/- a few.
- Courses: The meal may be limited to, say, 2 courses, or diners may be able to order 1, 2 or 3 courses as they wish.
- Menu: Agree the menu. Typical arrangements are:
  - Set Menu: The selection of dishes may be fixed, i.e. selected by you or the manager beforehand, and the diners get no choice on the night.
  - Limited Choice: Diners will be able to chose from a sub-set of the restaurant's menu, typically up to a certain value.
  - Free Choice: The diners can chose any dishes from the menu.
  - Pre-selection: The restaurant may want the diners to select their dishes a few days beforehand.
  - Drinks: The price might, or might not, include, say, one drink. Similarly, tea and coffee might be included, or not. Otherwise, diners will order and pay for their own drinks.

#### 4. CONFIRM ARRANGEMENTS

Confirm the arrangements, in writing, with the Manager, e.g. by email or WhatsApp, and keep copies of the correspondence.

#### 5. ADD TO WEBSITE

Update the Events page on the website. It should be made clear that the invitation is for I.D. Group Members only initially.

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## AT LEAST 3 WEEKS BEFORE

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### 6. SEND OUT INVITATIONS

Use Beacon to send out an invitation to all the I.D Group members. Include the following:

- Date and time.
- Venue, with address. Include details of parking, especially if parking space is limited. Include Blue Badge parking arrangements if there are any.
- Details of the room to be used, and seating arrangements if appropriate.
- Menu arrangements. Include link to the restaurant's website if possible, so that diners can see the menu, and, if necessary, send their order to you.
- Price(s). Indicate if cash is required, or if diners can use cards.
- Whether a tip is included in the price, and if not how that will be managed.
- Ask if diners have allergies or food restrictions.
- The deadline for responses.

### 7. COLLECT RESPONSES

Build a spreadsheet of the diners that want to come, include name, email address, allergies, food restrictions and, if required, their choice of food. Confirm to each diner that you have received their request and that a place has been reserved for them.

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## 2 WEEKS BEFORE

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### 8. CLOSE OR WIDEN THE INVITATIONS

After a reasonable time for existing Group members to respond, and if there is still capacity for more people to attend, include the event in the Friday newsletter, and publicise on our Website. If the event gets to be fully subscribed, update the Diary and Group page to that effect.

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## 1 WEEK BEFORE

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### 9. CONFIRM WITH RESTAURANT

At a suitable interval before the event, typically 1 week, check arrangements with restaurant and, if required, give them the list of dishes selected by the diners.

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## 2 DAYS BEFORE

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### 10. PREPARE FOR THE NIGHT

If diners are paying you in cash, make sure you have plenty of change.

Print out your spreadsheet, including a column to tick when they have paid.

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## ON THE NIGHT

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### 11. AT THE RESTAURANT

Turn up early.

Welcome diners in.

Take your spreadsheet with you and check off those that attend. Also use it to keep track of who's paid. It helps to have a 'secretary' to do this.

Take a bag to keep the money in (to keep the diners money strictly separate from your own money). Don't forget to pay for yourself!

During the meal, take a photo for the Website.

## **12. AT THE END OF THE NIGHT**

If you have collected the cash, pay for the meal.

Make sure diners have paid for their drinks.

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## **FOLLOW-UP**

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## **13. AFTER THE EVENT**

- Update this document with lessons learned.
- Add a Post to the web-page.