

## Food & Beverage - Offer Dessert Early in the Meal - By Joe Dunbar

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Years ago, my brother Paul invited my wife Jackie and I to dinner at the American Bounty Restaurant. The restaurant is run by the students at The Culinary Institute of America. They have a great program where you take a student to dinner and Paul was our student guest. Although the entire dinner was exceptional, I still remember the dessert over a decade later. It was a delicious Berry Cobbler served fresh from the oven.

After our server greeted us he promoted this special dessert option. He said he needed to take the order NOW because the fresh baked cobbler required over 20 minutes in the oven. We ordered the cobbler and the locally produced wine he recommended. He rushed to the kitchen to put in our dessert order while we read the menu.

The entire meal was marvelous. After our entree dishes were cleared, the warm cobbler was served with ice cream. It was excellent and I told many friends about the meal.

Out of curiosity, I recently ran a Google search ("American Bounty" "Culinary Institute" cobbler dessert) to find out if they still offered dessert early in the meal. They still have this policy in place. A restaurant review of American Bounty mentioned the dessert order policy:

Rick's dessert was an apple cobbler with cinnamon ice cream they made him order with his entree because they bake it fresh right then.

This policy is ideal for fine dining operations with long meal times. The guest orders a high profit item with plenty of add on potential immediately after being seated. We all ordered coffee later when the cobbler arrived. In addition, we tried a local dessert wine. The dessert course produced 25% of our total tab. Our check increased by 33% through the dessert course we decided on at the beginning of the meal.

Thanks!!!

Joe

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