

Omni Hotels Develops Banquet Menus Guided by The Culinary Institute of America

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Together, The Culinary Institute of America and Omni Hotels researched and evaluated flavors, textures and nutritional fundamentals to further elevate the food & beverage offerings that are part of the customizable Sensational Meetings program.

In January 2007, Omni Hotels unveiled Sensational Meetings as a brand-wide initiative centered on effectively customizing the environment of meetings to directly correlate with a meeting's purpose. Whether an organization is conducting a brainstorming session, strategizing over a complex negotiation or recognizing excellence in the organization, Omni's Sensational Meetings program is designed to shape the elements in order to maximize the meeting experience.

Foods clearly impact energy, mood and focus, which are critical to a successful meeting. By working with the event planner to customize the menu based on the agenda, these new menu offerings can support that intent. The new menu options -- based on recommendations from the CIA -- pair ingredients to the meeting's optimal atmosphere.

"The way we act and feel during a meeting experience can be dramatically influenced by what we eat," said Stephen Rosenstock, senior vice president of food & beverage for Omni Hotels. "Omni's work with The Culinary Institute of America takes the Sensational Meetings program to a new level by enabling us to maximize meeting success through unique culinary offerings."

Representing the next chapter in Omni's sensory activation mission, Sensational Meetings were crafted specifically for the all-important meetings marketplace. In developing the program, Omni has looked at every element of the meeting to ensure that attendees were in both a comfortable and conducive atmosphere. Refining the menu was the next logical element to further elevate the program's components, and a partnership with the CIA was a natural fit.

"The Culinary Institute of America's Industry Solutions Group was pleased to assist Omni Hotels in the development of exciting, sensible menu selections in support of the iconic Sensational Meetings platforms," said Dr. Victor Gielisse, certified master chef and associate vice president of The Culinary Institute of America. "In doing so, we combined best practices in culinary menu development techniques, ingredient selection, flavor dynamics and food pairing."

Energetic Meetings

An energetic environment is most commonly used for brainstorming, planning and training, and it calls for foods that motivate and evoke a fun spirit. Energetic meetings include vibrant, high-energy colors, unique lighting and fun, stimulating flavors such as ginger, horseradish, and rosemary. Guests attending an energetic meeting may find themselves sampling items such as strawberry-kiwi skewers, mandarin-orange ginger chews, wasabi salmon cakes or tropical fruit brochettes. Energetic meetings may also feature an energy drink station with unique beverages such as orange-zested cranberry shooters, fruit smoothies and vitamin waters.

Challenging Meetings

Because challenging meetings can involve transition and negotiation and tend to have periods of tension, the meeting space may feature lower lighting and tactile elements to help soothe the spirit. Omni can offer foods that would induce serenity and relaxation, specifically fresh sushi displays, herb-roasted chicken on sauteed leeks, chocolate banana spice cake and sun dried mango-papaya biscotti. Beverage selections include aromatic tea stations and cinnamon spiced granny apple shooters.

Recognition Meetings

Recognition meetings can honor accomplishments and build on a vision for the future. The featured food & beverage options were selected to bring a sense of success. The celebratory feeling can be complemented by foods such as baked brie en croute with apricot marmalade, basil and pine nut tortellini salad, ancho sugar-cured beef tenderloin and tri-color roman orzo. Champagnes and sparkling beverages can also serve as a congratulatory element. Desserts are common in moments of celebration, so the new recognition menu will include dark chocolate fountains or warm chocolate fondue with strawberries, pound cake, and giant gourmet marshmallows.

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