
Graduate Certificate in Inflight Catering and Services Management

Culinary Techniques for Airline Catering

Airline Catering:

Airline catering refers to the preparation and packaging of food and beverages for consumption during flights. This specialized form of catering involves preparing meals that can be served at high altitudes and under various constraints, such as limited storage space, time constraints, and safety regulations.

Culinary Techniques for Airline Catering:

Culinary techniques for airline catering refer to the specific methods and practices used in preparing, cooking, and presenting food for airline passengers. These techniques are tailored to meet the unique challenges of inflight dining, including limited equipment, space, and time constraints.

Airline Catering Equipment:

Airline catering equipment includes a wide range of tools, utensils, and appliances used in the preparation and serving of food onboard aircraft. This equipment is designed to be compact, lightweight, and durable to meet the specific requirements of inflight catering.

Batch Cooking:

Batch cooking is a culinary technique that involves preparing large quantities of food at once and storing portions for later use. This method is commonly used in airline catering to streamline the cooking process and ensure consistent quality across multiple meals.

Convection Ovens:

Convection ovens are specially designed ovens that use circulating air to cook food more quickly and evenly than conventional ovens. These ovens are commonly used in airline catering for their efficiency and ability to produce high-quality meals in a limited space.

Dehydration:

Dehydration is a food preservation technique that involves removing moisture from food to extend its shelf life. In airline catering, dehydration is often used to prepare dried fruits, vegetables, and meats for inflight meals.

Freeze-Drying:

Freeze-drying is a method of food preservation that involves freezing food and then removing the ice crystals through sublimation. This process results in lightweight, shelf-stable food products that are commonly used in airline catering for their long shelf life and minimal weight.

HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points):

HACCP is a systematic approach to food safety that identifies, evaluates, and controls potential hazards throughout the food production process. This critical system is essential in airline catering to ensure the safety and quality of meals served onboard.

High-Altitude Cooking:

High-altitude cooking refers to the culinary techniques used to prepare food at elevations above sea level. In airline catering, high-altitude cooking presents challenges such as reduced air pressure and lower boiling points, which can affect cooking times and recipes.

Meal Assembly:

Meal assembly is the process of combining pre-prepared components to create a complete dish or meal. In airline catering, meal assembly involves arranging individual portions of food into trays or containers for serving onboard aircraft.

Menu Planning:

Menu planning is the process of selecting and organizing dishes to create a balanced and appealing meal service. In airline catering, menu planning takes into account factors such as passenger preferences, dietary restrictions, and seasonal availability of ingredients.

Plating and Presentation:

Plating and presentation refer to the art of arranging food on plates or trays to enhance its visual appeal. In airline catering, plating and presentation are crucial for creating an attractive dining experience for passengers despite the constraints of inflight service.

Reheating Techniques:

Reheating techniques are methods used to warm precooked or chilled food to serving temperature. In airline catering, reheating techniques must be efficient and reliable to ensure that meals are served hot and safely to passengers onboard.

Sous Vide:

Sous vide is a cooking technique that involves vacuum-sealing food in a bag and cooking it in a water bath at a precise temperature. This method is commonly used in airline catering for its ability to produce tender, flavorful dishes with minimal loss of moisture.

Temperature Control:

Temperature control is essential in airline catering to ensure that food is stored, cooked, and served at safe temperatures to prevent foodborne illnesses. Proper temperature control measures must be followed throughout the catering process to maintain food safety standards.

Texture Modification:

Texture modification involves altering the texture of food to improve its palatability and presentation. In airline catering, texture modification techniques are used to adapt dishes for inflight service, such as thickening sauces or pureeing ingredients for easier consumption.

Tray Assembly:

Tray assembly is the process of arranging individual components of a meal, such as main dishes, sides, and desserts, onto serving trays for inflight service. In airline catering, tray assembly must be efficient and organized to ensure that meals are served promptly to passengers.

Vacuum Packing:

Vacuum packing is a method of food preservation that involves removing air from packaging to extend the shelf life of perishable items. In airline catering, vacuum packing is used to seal individual portions of food for storage and transportation onboard aircraft.

Waste Management:

Waste management in airline catering involves minimizing food waste and properly disposing of leftover or expired items. Efficient waste management practices are essential to reduce costs, maintain cleanliness, and adhere to environmental regulations in the aviation industry.

Weight and Portion Control:

Weight and portion control are critical in airline catering to ensure that meals are accurately portioned and meet the nutritional requirements of passengers. Strict weight and portion control measures are essential to manage costs and maintain consistency in meal service.

Xanthan Gum:

Xanthan gum is a food additive commonly used in airline catering to thicken, stabilize, and emulsify sauces, dressings, and other food products. This versatile ingredient helps improve the texture and shelf life of inflight meals without affecting flavor or nutritional value.

Yield Management:

Yield management in airline catering involves optimizing resources, such as ingredients, labor, and equipment, to maximize efficiency and profitability. Effective yield management strategies help caterers minimize waste, reduce costs, and enhance the overall quality of inflight meals.

Zester:

A zester is a kitchen tool used to remove the outer peel of citrus fruits in thin strips. In airline catering, a zester is essential for adding flavor and aroma to dishes, such as desserts or beverages, without including the bitter white pith beneath the peel.

This comprehensive glossary of culinary techniques for airline catering provides a detailed overview of the specialized skills and practices required in preparing meals for passengers onboard aircraft. By understanding these terms and concepts, students in the Graduate Certificate in Inflight Catering and Services Management can effectively apply culinary techniques to meet the unique challenges of inflight dining and deliver exceptional meal service to airline passengers.