

A Comfort Food Menu

These no-fuss, familiar foods are great for a casual wedding and if you have a lot of kids in attendance. These are the kinds of dishes that will surprise and delight.

Two Worthwhile Splurges

Should your budget have some leeway, consider these two ways to make your meal memorable.

Have a cheese plate brought out after the main course and before dessert. A typical assortment might include a soft cheese like Brie, a hard cheese like cheddar or Emmental, and a flavorful blue cheese like Gorgonzola. Serve with thin slices of French bread and fruit. The cheese course can be plated in the kitchen, or, for a more elegant option, a waiter can roll a trolley around to each table and cut individual wedges for guests. Cheese is such a personal taste, so I like the latter method because it allows guests to choose what appeals to them.

Serve a midnight snack, one of my favorite ways to keep the party going late. Obviously, that won't be an option in venues where the kitchen shuts down early or in rural areas where outside food sources aren't available. But if bringing out late-night munchies is feasible and you expect the party to be going strong at 1 A.M., it's always a crowd-pleaser. The food refuels guests for more dancing and steers guests who've been overfrequenting the bar in another direction. Popular choices are burgers and fries (I've brought them in from McDonald's and had waiters pass them on silver platters), breakfast burritos, or cookies with milk shooters. The snack should be something that people can eat with their hands; the revelers don't necessarily want to sit down, and tables have probably been cleared at this point. There's a lot of room for playing here, particularly since not everyone will still be around and not everyone will partake—if you're known for chowing down on chicken biscuits or hitting a diner for grilled cheese at 2 A.M., that's what you should serve.



I don't care whether you're wearing a three-piece suit or shorts and flip-flops—everybody loves pigs in a blanket.

• PASSED APPETIZERS •

Miniature Hamburgers with Caramelized Onions

Pigs in a Blanket
Spicy Mustard

Individual Crudités in a Shot Glass
Green Goddess Dip

Crab Cakes

Grilled Cheese Sandwiches

This retro salad has made such a comeback. You can also do it with Thousand Island dressing—my absolute favorite!

• SALAD COURSE •

Iceberg Lettuce Wedge Salad
Crumbled Blue Cheese, Bacon
Red and Yellow Cherry Tomatoes
Creamy Blue Cheese Dressing

Serve these in plastic baskets set directly on the table.

• ENTRÉE •

Boneless Short Ribs
Red Wine Sauce

Crispy Fried Chicken
Peach Chutney

Salmon with Leeks
White Wine Reduction

French Fries and Onion Rings
Ketchup, Mustard, and Ranch Dip

Grilled Vegetables
Herb Marinade

Throw in whatever other toppings you like on a sundae.

• DESSERT •

Hot Fudge Sundae
Vanilla Ice Cream

Hot Fudge, Crushed Almonds,
Whipped Cream
Bing Cherry Topping