

We managed to grab five minutes with King's Food's Head Chef, Matthew Weston, to pick his brains about event catering. We got his advice on everything from on-trend cocktails and brain-boosting superfoods to what you should never serve at a finger buffet.

What would you recommend as the best sparkling wine alternative to Champagne if the budget won't stretch?

There are many great sparkling wines that don't come from the Champagne region. French Cremant from Loire can be exceptional, Spanish Cava is very on trend and the Prosecco revolution has never been stronger.

What's the current cocktail of choice at swanky events these days?

Cocktail trends are becoming hugely diverse from alcoholic ice creams, lollies and Slushies made with a traditional cocktail base to the Mediterranean chic of a Negroni or Aperol Spritz. But the classic Martinis, Manhattans and Collins will always have their place at top events.

Which 3 foods would you avoid serving at a finger buffet?

Shell on prawns, ribs and sugared doughnuts. I don't think I need to explain why!

Which foods boost delegates' minds most?

A red quinoa, vegetable and spinach salad with pomegranate dressing is packed full of brain-boosting power.

Which dishes are considered passe in the event industry at the moment?

What is passé to some can always be reinvented by others and brought back stronger!

What's the biggest crowd-pleaser pud you've ever produced?

Peanut butter and dark chocolate fondant with yoghurt sorbet.

What sort of dishes break the ice most at formal dinners?

Something with theatre and imagination - starters and desserts are a good place for showmanship.

How many courses should you serve at a formal dinner?

Four; an amuse-bouche or fish course between a traditional starter, main and desert signifies a step up in formality and greater focus on food.

Which starter always proves the most popular with guests?

I've never know poached, cured and pan-fried salmon, borage, crispy salmon skin and pickled watermelon to disappoint guests.

What dish/canapé often comes back into the kitchen unfinished?

Anything that threatens to leave guests with greasy fingers (ie mini fish goujons) is an immediate turn off.

What's new and interesting in the vegetarian/vegan world at the moment?

New superfood grains are becoming increasingly popular, such as freekah.

What's the best sort of food to serve at a breakfast meeting?

Really depends on your guests. Traditional English and bacon rolls still have their place but at meetings people are often after lighter and healthy options such as fruit, mueslis and granolas.