

Advice to members taking on a catering duty at Priory Sailing Club

Our club provides free meals to PSC members on several occasions through our season, indeed such events are a highly valued aspect of PSC club life. The meals are produced by volunteer caterers who step forward, often with a helper, to provide uncomplicated home cooking for sailors! The following is some guidance which we hope will encourage you to take on the catering at one of our events.

Who am I cooking for? Food is usually provided for members, their families and occasionally guests to the club after some form of sailing event, so a range of ages from around six upwards.

How many people will I need to cook for? This is the most commonly asked question and the most difficult to answer. Weather conditions, time of year and the type of event will affect numbers. However, a good guide is 30-40 for most of the events apart from the AGM when you are more likely to be feeding 50-60.

How is the food served? We've adopted an informal approach to feeding our members/guests at these events. Usually people queue up, take a plate and help themselves to the food which is laid out on the kitchen counter top. You might want to be behind the counter to help scoop and serve the food particularly for the youngsters, and answer any questions about what's in the food. It's also a great opportunity to chat, socialise and make new friends.

What do I cook? This is entirely up to you, but you'll be providing lunch and/or tea for hungry sailors so simple to prepare, easy to serve and large portions is the name of the game. Lunch choices that have gone down well in the past include curry (one meat, one veggie) with rice, chillis (again, both meat and veggie options) with rice or baked potatoes, pasta bakes and pizza. In summer, we have had quiche, pasties and salads. Desserts go down a treat, and shop-bought is absolutely fine. For afternoon tea, a selection of sandwiches or salads, with some cakes and biscuits go down well. But these are just suggestions - if you have an idea for something different, go for it!

What food intolerances and preferences should I consider? We always offer a vegetarian option and actually there is nothing to say that you can't prepare a completely meat-free meal. We rely on individual members to notify us of any other dietary needs such as gluten intolerance. These requests are usually made via the committee/commodore and will be passed on to you in good time.

Do I have to wash up? You'll find that once the meal is over, members will be willing to help with the washing and drying, but never be afraid to stick a tea towel in someone's hand and ask for help!

Where shall I cook my meal? Again, this is entirely up to you. Some members prefer to prepare the meal in the club-house galley, while others do some or all of the preparation at home and bring it to the club to finish off and serve. There is a good selection of pots (large and small), pans, bowls, utensils, plates and cutlery in the cupboards under the worktops, and a number of serving dishes. If you would like to borrow any of the above to prepare your meal at home, contact one of the committee members for the access code to the Club gate padlock and the key safe.

Can I use a BBQ? Yes, there is a gas BBQ on the balcony and BBQs in the summer are very popular. It's worth checking that there is enough gas in the bottle prior to cooking. If you find it's empty or close to empty, then please notify a committee member who can arrange for the spare to be fitted.

What's the budget? The unofficial budget has always been £2.50 per head and some Priory chefs pride themselves on managing it for less than this. However, it would be a shame to limit your creativity for the sake of an extra few pence per head.

How do I reclaim the money I have spent on my meal? Please send an email with your expenses claim, a photo of your receipts/s, and your bank details for payment, to the club treasurer, William Armitage at williama@ntlworld.com. Claims are usually reimbursed within a few days.

Who can answer any questions I may have? The catering rota is put together by Daniel Perry, PSC Committee Member and the Club's RYA Principal. Please feel free to contact me by email at Dan.audi.bedford@gmail.com