DISH DIRECTORY — GUIDE

How to choose a restaurant for a group

Pick a group restaurant by party size, budget per person, dietary needs and booking rules. Start with these four filters before you compare menus.

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Feeding a group takes more planning than booking dinner for two. A room that suits a quiet date can fail a party of ten. Work through four questions first: how many people, what budget, what diets and what booking rules. The answers narrow the field fast.

Start with the headcount

Get a firm number before you look at menus. Many restaurants seat parties of six at a standard table but move parties of eight or more to a set menu, a private room or a large-party policy. Ask the organizer for a final count and a deadline for changes. A restaurant plans staff and food around the number you give, so an accurate count matters to both sides.

Call the restaurant once you pass eight people, even if it takes online bookings. Online systems often cap party size, and a short call confirms whether the room can seat you together. Ask where a large party sits. A round table in the main room feels different from a long table by the kitchen door.

Set a budget per person

Groups split over money more than over food. Agree on a per-person range before anyone suggests a room. Remember that the entree price is only part of the check. Drinks, shared starters, tax and tip can double the menu price of a main course. Tasting menus look fixed, but wine pairings and supplements add up.

Share the budget when you invite people. A simple note with the expected cost per person avoids awkward moments at the table. If the group spans students and executives, pick the middle of the range rather than the top.

Collect dietary needs early

Ask every guest about dietary needs in the invitation. Vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free and halal diets are common, and allergies can be serious. A restaurant with a broad menu handles mixed needs better than a specialist. Barbecue and steakhouses can work for gluten-free guests but leave vegetarians with little choice. Mediterranean, Lebanese and Indian kitchens usually cover the widest range.

Check the menu online before you book. Look for at least two real options per diet, not a single side salad. For severe allergies, call the kitchen and ask how it handles them. This directory lists restaurants by city with dietary options on each listing, so you can filter before you shortlist.

Check the booking rules

Read the reservation policy before you commit. Large parties often face an automatic gratuity, a deposit or a set menu. Cancellation windows vary from a few hours to several days. Note the rules and forward them to the group so one late cancellation does not cost the organizer.

Confirm the booking the day before. Give the restaurant your final count and arrival time. Arrive together when you can. Most rooms hold a large table for only a short window, and late guests can lose the table for everyone.

A simple shortlist method

Pick three places that pass all four filters. Compare them on location, noise and menu variety. Groups talk more than couples, so favor rooms with space between tables. Then book the one nearest to most guests. A short trip home ends the evening well.

Frequently asked questions

How far ahead should a group book a restaurant?

For a party of six or more, book at least a week ahead. Popular rooms and holiday weekends can need a month or more.

What should I ask the restaurant before a group dinner?

Ask about the largest table they seat, whether they add an automatic gratuity for groups, and how they handle separate checks.