



22 TIPS FOR BOOKING FOOD TRUCKS



- 1. USE PROPER BOOKING ETIQUETTE.** Include ALL known event details in your first booking request message to a vendor. It is essential for vendors to know this info for every booking:
 - **Date**
 - **Set-up/arrival time**
 - **Service time frame**
 - **Address/venue name**
 - **Type of event**
 - **Who is paying (individuals or host)**
 - **Number of people expected**
 - **Any other food vendors booked**

...the more of these details you already have figured out, the smoother the booking process/communication will be!
- 2. Most food vendors have minimums.** Be aware that due to food costs, gas prices, employee wages, insurance, and other expenses many food vendors require a sales minimum to protect the business and ensure it does more than just break even.
- 3. Communicate effectively.** While texting or social media messaging may be easiest for you, many food vendors prefer to communicate bookings through email. Phone calls are great to discuss certain questions, but it's often easier for a business to have all the info in an email to refer back to. Sometimes social media messages get lost or businesses don't always get notified of comments and messages. Emails also leave a helpful trail for referencing back to later.
- 4. Exchange cell numbers for day-of-event contacts.** Both the food vendor and the booking host should have someone they can get ahold of immediately for any reason. This is especially important if there are any event changes due to weather, mechanical issues, etc.
- 5. Do your part to promote.** For public events, share on all socials and groups to get as much exposure and business for the food vendors. Pro-tips for neighborhood events: hand out flyers, make a public Facebook event, post in all relevant Facebook groups. If a food vendor doesn't do well, they won't come back.
- 6. 1:250 Ratio of food vendors to people.** A general rule of thumb is to have 1 truck for every 250 people you're expecting. This ensures that each food vendor makes enough sales to make it worth their time and do better than just breaking even. Ratio differs based on event length, type, public vs private event, and effective promotion. Keep in mind all vendors have a capacity of the number of items they can serve per hour based on their menu options and staffing.
- 7. 1:5 Ratio of dessert vendors to meal vendors.** Another guideline is to not have more than one dessert option for every five lunch/dinner options. Keep in mind that some lunch/dinner vendors also have dessert items on their menus. You may ask them to remove that from their menu for your event to avoid overlapping menus. Make sure vendors are aware ahead of time of what other food vendors will be there.
- 8. Don't overlap vendor menus.** Unless the event is guaranteed to have multiple hundreds of attendees, make sure that there is no overlap in menu offerings.

9. **Have space for parking and queue line.** Keep in mind parking needs - some rigs are much longer than others! Avoid making a food vendor parallel park. Also, keep in mind having enough room for people to form a line and wait for food - especially if there are multiple food vendors. Make sure queue lines won't intersect.
10. **Give vendors the exact location of where to park and which direction to serve.** PRO TIP: send a schematic or drawing of where food trucks are to park and set up.
11. **Make sure the venue knows a food truck is coming.** Some event spaces have particular rules and guidelines about food trucks on their property. Additionally, double-check if the food vendor needs a permit (most parks and many neighborhoods require one).
12. **Ensure proper evening lighting.** In the fall and winter, it is especially important to make sure customers will have adequate outdoor lighting by either ensuring food vendors have their own lighting so their menu can be seen or by the host parking them near a light source depending on the venue.
13. **Clear, large text menus.** Request for a vendor's menu to be easily understood and able to be read even by people waiting further back in line.
14. **Check-in and confirm booking details at least 1 week in advance.** Sometimes food vendors are booked months in advance, so it's a best practice to connect with them at least a week prior so you can confirm the date, time, menu, and parking details.
15. **Let vendor staff know where restroom facilities are.** Especially if the event is over 2 hours long.
16. **Have trash cans.** Don't assume a food vendor is supplying one. Have enough trash cans spaced out based on event and venue size.
17. **Engage with food vendors before, during, and after the event.** Make sure everyone is on the same page, check-in during the event for a face-to-face introduction, and follow up afterward to see if they had a good turnout and would like to come back.
18. **No surprises.** You can never overcommunicate when it comes to event details, no matter how small the occasion. For example, always inform a food vendor of any other vendors, food or otherwise, that will also be present.
19. **Consider generator volume.** Communicate to vendors at booking if there's a decibel level max. Some events do not allow loud generators.
20. **Consider music guidelines.** If the vendor will be playing music make sure it's appropriate lyrics for the clientele and a reasonable volume.
21. **Life happens, be kind.** Understand that if your food vendor cannot make it last minute, it's probably harder on them than it is on you. Your dinner plans may have to change, but it's their livelihood that takes the hit.
22. **Extra credit.** Post a shoutout and photos of your food and experience on social media and tag the vendor! This type of promotion means the world to business owners!



HAPPY TRUCKIN'!