

and hours of operation. There are many styles of menus. Some of the most popular types of menu are:

- À la carte and modified à la carte menus
- California menus
- Du jour menus
- Table d'hôte and prix fixe menus
- Fixed menus
- Cyclical menus
- Limited menus

**À la Carte and Modified à la Carte Menus** An à la carte menu

(AH LA CART) is a menu on which each food item or beverage is priced and served separately. Typically, an à la carte menu is for a specific meal, such as lunch or dinner. This type of menu is popular because customers can choose exactly what they want as main courses, side dishes, appetizers, salads, or desserts. The à la carte menu offers the freedom to mix and match according to individual taste. A customer may choose two appetizers and a salad rather than choosing a main course, for example. Hotels and upscale restaurants often use à la carte menus.

On a **modified à la carte menu**, appetizers and desserts are usually priced and served separately. Often the main course will include a soup or salad as well as a starch, vegetable, and possibly a beverage. This type of menu is often found in family-style restaurants.

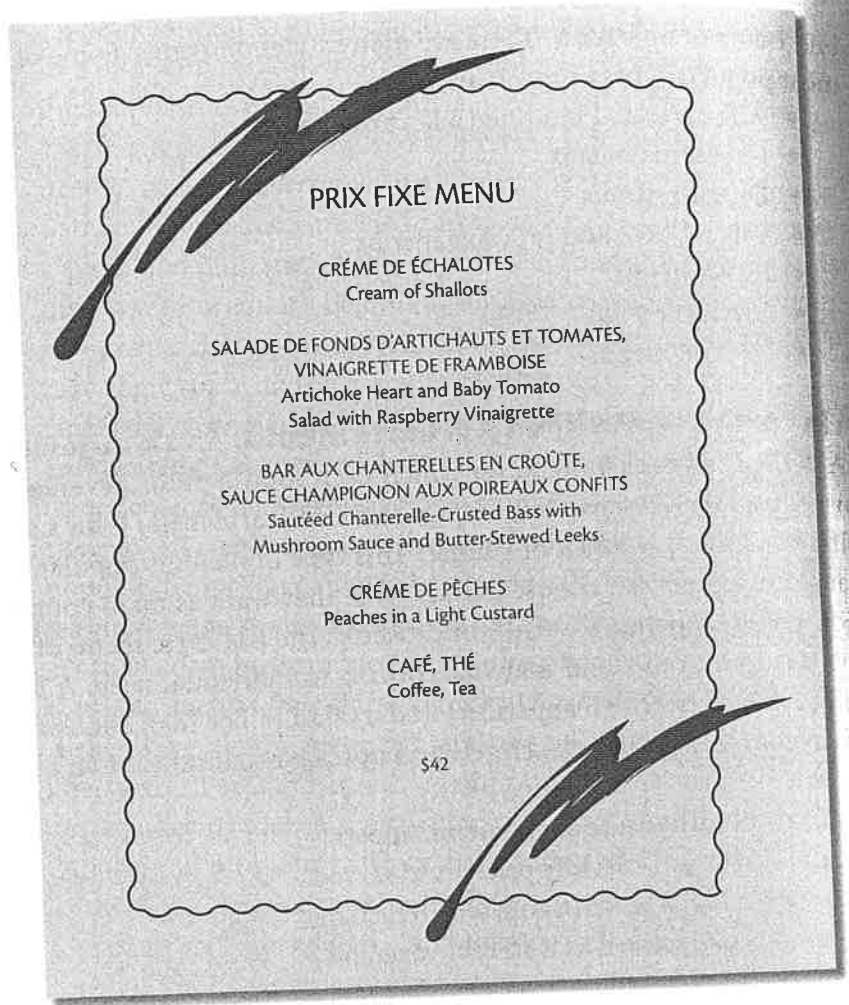
**California Menu** A California menu is a single menu listing breakfast, lunch, and dinner foods. It offers customers the freedom to choose any item at any time of day. California menus are especially popular with food-service establishments that are open 24 hours. They are also used for hotel room service.

**Du Jour Menu** A du jour menu (DOO ZHOOR) lists food that is served only on that particular day. The next day, a different du jour menu will be offered. The words “du jour” are French for “of the day.” Sometimes a restaurant has only one or two daily specials that are made just for that day. A soup du jour, for example, is a soup made just for that day. These restaurants will have a du jour menu in addition to their standard à la carte menu.

**FIGURE 21-3**  
**Du Jour Menu**  
A restaurant's specials of the day.  
**Drawing Conclusions** *What is the best way to present a du jour menu, from both the restaurant's and the customer's point of view?*

<i>Appetizers</i>	
Louisiana Duck & Okra Gumbo	7.00
Oven-Roasted Shrimp with Rosemary White Beans	8.00
<i>Entrees</i>	
Grilled Filet Mignon Medallions with Mushroom Sauce served with Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes	21.50
Seared Wild Salmon with Crispy Polenta, Goat Cheese and Glazed Baby Carrots	18.00
<i>Desserts</i>	
Glazed Baked Apple on Puff Pastry with Vanilla Ice Cream	6.50
Hot Molten Chocolate Cake with Cherry Compote	7.00

Prix fixe menu ►



**Table d'Hôte and Prix Fixe Menus** A **table d'hôte** (TAH-blah DOHT) menu offers a complete meal—from an appetizer to a dessert and often including a beverage—for a set price. Banquets often feature a table d'hôte menu. For example, diners might choose in advance from four meals: beef, chicken, fish, or vegetarian. Each meal would include an appetizer, a salad, rolls, a main course, a dessert, and coffee or tea. Individual meals might be priced separately.

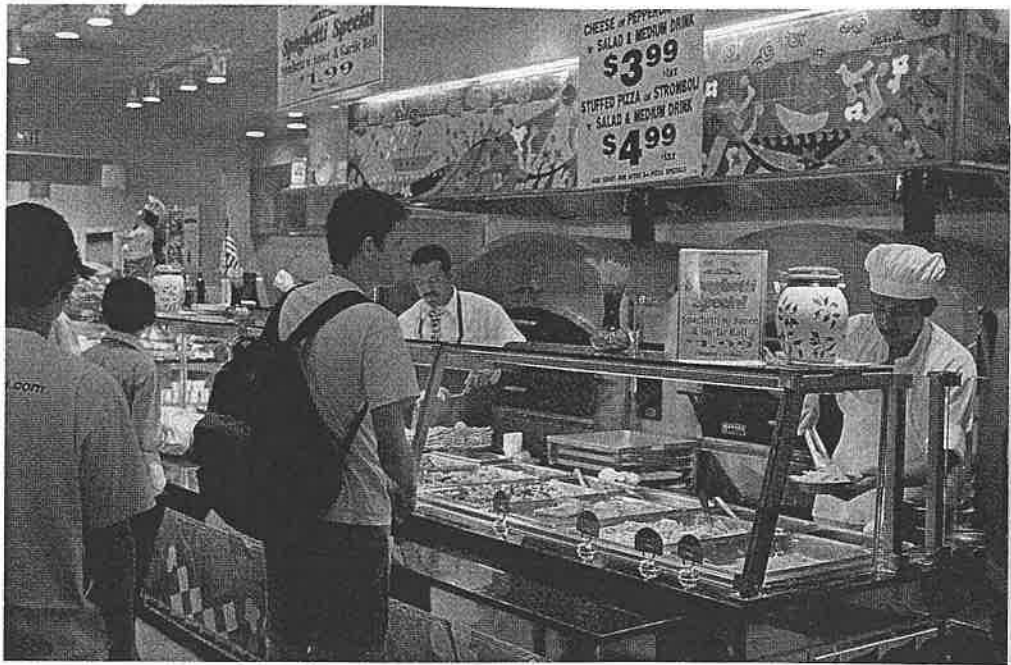
A **prix fixe** (PREE FEEKS) menu is similar to the table d'hôte menu. A prix fixe menu typically offers a complete meal, often including a beverage, for a set price. Sometimes diners are offered a choice for one or more of the courses, and sometimes diners can choose, for a supplemental charge, a luxury item such as lobster or caviar. Most of the time the price of a prix fixe menu is relatively low because it reduces production costs by allowing the kitchen to operate at a set pace and flow. If the same dishes were ordered à la carte, the bill would be much higher. Both casual restaurants and upscale restaurants use prix fixe menus.

**Fixed Menu** A **fixed menu** offers the same items every day. Some customers like fixed menus because they continue to return to

restaurant for a favorite dish and would be disappointed if the dish weren't offered. For this reason, many neighborhood and ethnic restaurants use a fixed menu, although they often supplement the menu with du jour offerings.

**Cyclical Menu** A cyclical menu (SICK-li-cal) is written for a certain period of time and then it repeats itself. For example, a cyclical menu (also called a cycle menu) might repeat after three weeks, although the time between cycles may vary based on seasonal availability of ingredients and other factors. Some cyclical menus change four times a year, according to the seasons. Some change every week, so the same food is offered every Monday, different food is offered every Tuesday, and so on. Longer-term cyclical menus are particularly suited for institutions such as hospitals, schools, and cafeterias where the same people are being served each day. Weekly cyclical menus are particularly suited to family, casual, and neighborhood restaurants.

**Limited** A limited menu offers a limited range of choices to the customer. For example, a restaurant might offer a limited menu of four sandwiches, two soups, and a salad for lunch. A fast-food menu is an example of a limited menu. Limited menus make it easy to keep track of costs because there are typically fewer ingredients.



**FIGURE 21-4**  
**Cyclical Menu**

Colleges and institutions often have menus that are cyclical.  
**Drawing Conclusions** What period of time would you use as a cycle in your school cafeteria?



**Reading  
Checkpoint**

What are seven common types of menus?

## Planning a Menu

When you write a menu, the goal is to please the customer as well as the owner. It is possible, with careful planning, to do both. Keep these four important considerations in mind when planning a menu:

- Type of place and customers
- Facility, staff, and equipment limitations
- Balance and variety
- Truthfulness

## CHEF'S TIP

### COLLECT YOUR THOUGHTS

Whenever you have a menu idea, write it down and keep it in a file folder for future reference. Put any copies of menus that inspire you in the same file.