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## Top 10 Restaurant Server Interview Questions and Answers [Updated 2024]

### Description

If you're pursuing a role as a restaurant server, you can expect to be asked about your service skills, knowledge about the food industry, and your ability to handle stressful situations. It's crucial to be prepared for these interviews, and understanding the common questions can significantly enhance your chances.

## Restaurant Server Interview Questions

**Tell me about a time you had to handle a difficult customer. How did you handle it?**

### How to Answer

When answering this question, it is important to demonstrate your ability to stay calm and professional under pressure. Explain the situation clearly, how you addressed it, and the outcome. Also, highlight any lessons learned or skills used during the incident.

### Sample Answer

I was once serving a customer who was upset because his meal was not as he expected. He was raising his voice and other customers had started to notice. I remained calm, apologized for his dissatisfaction, and offered to replace his meal. I also informed my manager about the situation. The customer eventually calmed down and was satisfied with the way I handled the situation. This experience taught me the importance of staying calm under pressure, and how good customer service can turn a potentially negative situation into a positive one.

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**How do you handle a situation where a customer is dissatisfied with the food served?**

### How to Answer

The ideal answer to this question will demonstrate your ability to handle difficult situations and your communication skills. It's important to convey that you would listen to the customer's complaints, apologize for their dissatisfaction, and take immediate action to remedy the situation. This could involve offering a replacement meal, a discount, or a free item. You should also express your



willingness to communicate the issue to the kitchen staff or manager, showing that you understand the importance of feedback for improving the restaurant's service.

### **Sample Answer**

If a customer is unhappy with their meal, I would first apologize for their dissatisfaction and then ask them specifically what they didn't like about the food. Depending on their response, I might suggest a different dish that they might enjoy more. I would then communicate the issue to the kitchen and see if a replacement meal could be prepared. If necessary, I would also discuss the situation with my manager to see if we could offer the customer a discount or a complimentary item. In all cases, my goal would be to turn a negative experience into a positive one and ensure the customer leaves satisfied.

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## **How would you handle a situation where you made a mistake with a customer's order?**

### **How to Answer**

The interviewer wants to see if you can admit to making mistakes and handle the situation professionally. You should describe a step-by-step process that includes acknowledging the mistake, apologizing to the customer, correcting the error, and taking measures to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

### **Sample Answer**

If I made a mistake with a customer's order, I would immediately acknowledge the error and apologize to the customer. I would then inform my manager about the situation. If it was possible, I would correct the order myself. Otherwise, I would seek assistance from the kitchen staff to correct the order as quickly as possible. After serving the correct order, I would check back with the customer to ensure they are satisfied. I would also take extra care in the future to make sure I don't repeat the same mistake.

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## Can you describe a situation where you had to multitask while serving customers?

### How to Answer

The interviewer wants to know about your multitasking skills which are necessary for a server job. You should provide a specific instance where you successfully handled multiple tasks at once. You can talk about how you manage different tables, how you prioritize tasks and how you handle stress during peak hours.

### Sample Answer

During one of my previous roles, there was a situation where a large party of 20 came in unannounced during our busiest hour. I was already managing several tables, but with my manager's permission, I took on the large party as well. I started by reassuring my other tables, then quickly took the large party's drink orders while welcoming them. I used my notepad to keep track of all the orders and paced myself to ensure that everyone was taken care of. It was difficult, but I was able to serve all my tables successfully without any complaints.

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## How do you manage your time and prioritize tasks during busy periods?

### How to Answer

The interviewer wants to assess your ability to manage time effectively and handle pressure in a high-paced environment. Describe the strategies you use to prioritize tasks and ensure efficiency. Mention how you keep calm and focused during busy periods, and how you use your judgment to decide what needs immediate attention and what can wait.



### **Sample Answer**

When the restaurant gets busy, I always take a moment to organize my tasks. I prioritize based on urgency and importance. For example, if I have to serve a table, take a new order, and clean a table for new guests, I would serve the table first because they have been waiting the longest, then take the new order, and finally clean the table. I also ensure to communicate well with my team and ask for help when needed. Maintaining a calm demeanor helps me stay focused and provide excellent service, even when it's busy.

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## **What strategies do you use to ensure order accuracy when handling multiple tables?**

### **How to Answer**

The candidate should showcase their ability to multitask and maintain accuracy when dealing with multiple tables. They could mention strategies such as double-checking orders, using a notepad for order taking, and confirming orders with the kitchen staff. An understanding of the menu and the offerings is also crucial for order accuracy.

### **Sample Answer**

When handling multiple tables, I always make sure to write down the orders as the customers give them. This not only helps me remember the orders but also reduces chances of error. I will also repeat the order back to the customer to ensure that I have it correct. Once the order is ready, I double-check it against my notes before serving it to the customer. Additionally, I try to stay updated on the menu and the dishes, so I can accurately take orders, even for items that have recently been added or changed.

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## **How would you deal with a customer who is trying to get a free meal by complaining excessively?**

### **How to Answer**

The interviewer is looking for your conflict resolution skills and your ability to maintain professionalism under pressure. Always highlight that you would handle such a situation calmly and professionally. Emphasize the importance of listening to the customer's concerns and validating their feelings. Then, explain how you would try to find a solution within the restaurant's policies without escalating the situation. If the situation becomes too complicated, you should know when it's time to involve a manager.



### **Sample Answer**

I believe it's important to listen to the customer's concerns and make them feel heard. I would calmly and politely ask the customer specific questions about what they're unhappy with and try to find a resolution. If the customer continues to complain excessively even after I've tried to address the issue, I would then involve the manager, as they are more equipped to handle such situations. My primary goal is always to ensure the customer leaves with a positive experience, even if they were initially unhappy.

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## **How would you handle a situation where a customer has a food allergy and needs special accommodation?**

### **How to Answer**

A good answer will show understanding and sensitivity towards the customer's needs. It is important to assure the interviewer that you take such requests seriously and will do everything in your power to communicate the customer's needs to the kitchen. Also, emphasize your ability to provide excellent customer service in challenging situations.

### **Sample Answer**

When dealing with a customer with food allergies, I first make sure to understand their specific needs and restrictions by asking them detailed questions. I then clearly communicate these needs to the kitchen staff to ensure the meal is prepared safely. I also double-check the order before serving it to the customer. I believe it's important to make every customer feel safe and cared for, regardless of their dietary restrictions.

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## **Can you describe how you would handle a situation where a customer has a special request that is not on the menu?**

### **How to Answer**

The interviewer wants to see your problem-solving skills and your ability to meet customers' needs. Show that you are flexible, creative, and committed to providing excellent customer service. Describe the steps you would take to handle the situation, such as discussing with the chef or manager, communicating clearly with the customer, and finding a satisfactory solution.

### **Sample Answer**

If a customer requested something not on the menu, I would first apologize for the inconvenience and



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then explain what we can offer instead. If it's a simple modification, I would communicate with the kitchen staff to see if we can accommodate. If it's a complex request, I would involve the manager or chef, then provide the customer with options based on their feedback. My goal is to ensure the customer leaves satisfied, even if we can't fulfill the exact request.

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## How would you handle a situation where a table was not satisfied with your service?

### How to Answer

The answer should demonstrate your ability to stay calm under pressure, communicate effectively, and resolve issues. You should emphasize your desire to ensure customer satisfaction and your willingness to take responsibility and make amends when necessary.

### Sample Answer

Firstly, I would apologize sincerely for any inconvenience caused. I believe in taking responsibility, even if the issue might not have been directly my fault. I would then ask them to elaborate on what went wrong so I could understand better. Once I've gathered the information, I would do my best to rectify the situation. If it's something within my control, I would fix it immediately. If not, I would communicate the issue to my manager and ensure it gets resolved. My goal is to ensure that every customer leaves the restaurant happy and satisfied, so I would do everything in my power to turn the situation around.

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## Restaurant Server Job Title Summary





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<b>Job Description</b>	A Restaurant Server takes orders, answers questions about the menu and food, sells the restaurant's food and drinks, takes payment, communicates orders with the kitchen staff, seats customers, and helps with customer service and cleaning.
<b>Skills</b>	Customer service skills, Communication skills, Physical stamina, Listening skills, Organizational skills, Sales skills, Detail-oriented
<b>Industry</b>	Food Services, Hospitality
<b>Experience Level</b>	Entry level
<b>Education Requirements</b>	No formal education is required, though a high school diploma or equivalent may be preferred by some employers
<b>Work Environment</b>	Restaurant Servers typically work in restaurants, bars, hotels, and other food service establishments. The work can be fast-paced and stressful during busy times. Shifts can include nights, weekends, and holidays.
<b>Salary Range</b>	\$20,000 to \$50,000 per year, often depending largely on tips
<b>Career Path</b>	Restaurant Servers can advance to supervisory or managerial roles with experience. Some may also choose to move into other areas of the hospitality industry.
<b>Popular Companies</b>	Olive Garden, Applebee's, Chili's, Red Lobster, Outback Steakhouse



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