

How to Stock the Bar at Your Wedding (100 Guests)

Planning to stock the bar yourselves? First, check to see if your venue charges a corkage fee, so you can incorporate that cost into your total alcohol budget. Then, download this helpful list that includes everything you'll need to set up a full bar for a four-hour evening reception for 100 guests. Estimate that the crowd will consume one drink per person per hour, or about five drinks over the course of the evening. Some will drink less, obviously—but some may drink more.

Your Shopping List:

Alcohol

- Beer: 5 to 6 cases
- Whiskey: 1 liter
- Bourbon: 1 liter
- Gin: 2 to 3 liters
- Scotch: 2 liters
- Rum: 2 liters
- Vodka: 6 liters
- Tequila: 1 liter
- Champagne: 1 to 1 1/2 cases (include an additional 18 bottles for a champagne toast)
- Red wine: 2 cases
- White wine: 3 1/2 cases
- Dry vermouth: 1 liter
- Sweet vermouth: 1 liter

Mixers

- Tonic: 1 case
- Club soda: 1 case
- Cranberry juice: 2 gallons
- Orange juice: 1 gallon
- Grapefruit juice: 1 gallon
- Ginger ale: 1 case
- Triple sec: 1 liter
- Lime juice: 1 gallon
- Sparkling water: 2 cases
- Bottled water: 3 cases
- Diet coke: 2 cases
- Coke: 2 cases

How many drinks in a bottle?

A bottle of champagne fills six to eight glasses

A bottle of wine fills five glasses

A liter bottle of liquor makes about 18 drinks

How many bottles in a case?

A case of wine contains 12 bottles.

A case of beer contains 24 bottles or cans.

Know Your Bars:

The Open Bar

An open bar is the most gracious approach -- no guest should pay for anything at the wedding -- but it's also the most expensive. Guests can order any drink on the planet, and you'll have to pick up the hefty tab when the party's done. Because there's no limit, people may drink like guppies. Know anyone who tends to imbibe too much? Tell the bartender in advance.

The Limited Bar

You offer a selection of drinks -- beer, wine, and mixed vodka drinks, for example -- and set specific consumption times, such as the cocktail hour, the toasts, and an hour after dinner. Consider hiring waiters to pass drinks on trays rather than letting guests go up to the bar. You'll have to pay for the waiters, but you'll probably save money on alcohol, and fewer guests will go overboard. If you limit the amount of time the bar is open, make sure the waiters circulate during dinner to refill glasses of water and soda.

The Cash Bar

Don't have a cash bar without a great reason (there really isn't one). After all, you don't invite people to your house for dinner and then charge them for the butter. Trust us on this one. It's not a good cost-cutting solution and is way too controversial.

A Dry House

If you, your families, and most of your guests don't drink alcohol, skip it. Serve sparkling water, soda, and nonalcoholic mixed drinks instead. If you want some bubbly for toasting, go for some token champagne or sparkling cider.

Resources: Leslie Lamb, beverage catering director of Gordon's Fine Wines & Liquors, Waltham, MA

<http://wedding.theknot.com/wedding-planning/wedding-reception-planning/articles/how-to-stock-the-bar-at-your-wedding.aspx>

