

Organizing Group Events

If you can commit to scheduling and administrating two meetups per year, I'll waive your annual dues. I don't want to lose anyone over a \$10 fee. Here are tips.

How to organize an event:

1. **Research** the venue and confirm that they have a semi-private room. In the event of no semi-private room, assure that they have an area of tables (sufficient tables to accommodate about 85% of RSVPs) that can be **reserved** for our group. (Otherwise we will be dispersed throughout the venue).
2. **Room Fees:** Assure that the restaurant/venue **does not charge a room fee** or require minimum attendance guarantee. Since our group is a loose affiliation, we cannot be responsible for no-shows or room fee collections. If the venue requires this, we must look for a different venue.
3. **Why would a restaurant be willing to NOT charge a room fee:** Restaurants pay large fees to advertize on Radio and TV, and lose money on Groupons, Living Social, Restaurant.com and similar programs in hopes of bringing in new customers. We can let them know that *860 members of our group* who have an interest in wine and fine dining will see their venue advertized on Meetup.com and up to 40 new patrons may be introduced to their restaurant. They can make a *small profit* from our group, but the awareness of their venue will be enhanced without spending big bucks on advertizing.
4. **Cost per Person:** We have 860 members in our group, but rarely do we have attendance at any venue over 40 people. The range is usually between 10-40 folks, depending on cost per person and desirability of the venue. Venues charging less than \$10 (wine tastings with hors d'ourves) will have many more RSVPs than expensive restaurants with food and wine pairings over \$50 per person.
5. **Guarantees:** Please let the venue know that RSVPs **are not** a guarantee of attendance. We average 60-85% of RSVPs in attendance at a venue depending on weather, desirability of the venue, and the cost per person. Beautiful weather often means more no-shows. Please let the restaurant know **we cannot guarantee attendance** for this reason.
6. **Food:** Typically beef, chicken, fish, with a vegetarian option. Best is to allow *ordering off the menu* so everyone can choose what they would like to spend and what they would like to eat. If a large number of RSVPs are expected, the restaurant may want to limit the menu. Try to negotiate a good meal price for the group. Preferably one including tax and tip, but if not, let members know so that they won't be surprised when a \$29.95 meal turns into \$38 per person after tax and a mandatory gratuity (often common for groups >6 people) are added to the final bill .
7. **Wine pairings:** Hopefully the restaurant can arrange for 3 or 4 wine pairings in the meal price. Possibly with an option to buy a bottle at state minimum price. (Many venues will offer this). Will there be a waiter or manager present to discuss the wine pairings and introduce the wines? A real plus.
8. **Make sure that the restaurant is willing to do individual bills.** The last thing you want is a restaurant demanding one person pay, and you having to collect from 20 or 30 people. If the restaurant won't do individual bills, move on to another venue.
9. **Questions?** Please call me at: 614-264-1755 Steve Petrosino, Organizer, Dublin Wine Meetup.