

Midnight Specials

Sate late-night hunger with the latest reception trend

by JESS THOMSON

photographs by LARA FERRONI

SO FAR, YOU'RE PLANNING a fantasy reception: Great champagne. A remarkable dinner. A gorgeous and sinful cake. And then the first dance, an awkwardly adorable moment captured on DVD and posted to YouTube by the best man before anyone notices that he's gone. After that, all bets are off. To stack the deck for when the reveling gets rowdy, plan on throwing out a surprise that will set your party apart: midnight snacks.

Jessica and Mataio Gillis, owners of Bellingham's Ciao Thyme Catering, have seen it time and time again: After two hours of serious dancing, guests get hungry again. A late-night snack menu sends the message that the gracious hosts have thought of everything. "This trend is catching on because it keeps the party going," the Gillises say, adding that bites can be sweet or savory, but often tend toward creative takes on comfort foods.

We surveyed area caterers for their most innovative midnight munchies menus, and had them pair the bites with knock-your-socks-off cocktails, to boot. (And because we know you like the big picture, we asked them to include the delicious details of the main course as well.) From Southern comfort snacking to sophisticated French bites and Spanish-inspired early-morning breakfast, they've left no detail undreamt. Herban Feast's sliders, for example, are conveyed by servers sporting holstered bottles of ketchup, grainy mustard, and lemon-dill aioli, and Gourmando's truffle-scented popcorn is made in a popper right on the dance floor. Genius? We think so. Because after all that attention to detail, why go out with anything but a bang?



LATE-NIGHT NOSH
City Catering Co.'s
finger-licking chicken



SOUTHERN COMFORT

Buttermilk Fried Chicken Skewer
with Bourbon Lemonade Shot

Nothing says “foot-stomping summer wedding” like City Catering’s Low Country Southern Dinner Buffet. Creole favorites such as johnnycakes, shrimp and grits, and smoked double-bone pork chops set the stage for a rollicking good time. Then, just when guests start to flag, bites of tender, protein-rich buttermilk fried chicken rev the party up again. And those lemonade shots—made with lemon juice, mint, bourbon, and a touch of sugar—will knock their socks off. That is, if they’re not off already.

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