

# Late-Night Eats

GIVE YOUR GUESTS A BOOST OF ENERGY AND KEEP THE PARTY ROLLING WITH THESE MIDNIGHT SNACK IDEAS.



MEGAN AND BENJAMIN ROGERS knew their wedding was going to run late, and as the evening wore on, everyone would be hungry. The couple's wedding planner had asked their caterer at Windows on Minnesota for a snack of pizza and silver-dollar-size mini-burgers topped with fried onions. Then Rogers suggested something she thought everyone would enjoy late at night—milk and cookies. "I thought it would be fun to have milk in the kind of cartons they had in second grade," she says. "I knew everyone would look at them and reminisce. And who doesn't like cookies and milk?"

Rogers isn't the only bride ordering up the kind of late-night snacks you'd find in grade school or at the State Fair. Mini-doughnuts hot off the fryer, corn dogs, pizza, burgers, fries, cookies and milk have been taking center stage once the cake-cutting is over and dancing begins.

"This trend has become popular in

the Midwest the last few years," says Terrie Bulanek, director of catering at the Saint Paul Hotel. "It started on the coasts, where people traditionally have events that extend late into the night." Food is often served on small plates or in mini shooter glasses so it's easier to handle if you're formally dressed.

Some couples have late-night "after-glow" parties or parlor events in a separate room near the reception area. "Mostly, these parlors open around 10 p.m. and offer a more intimate getaway," says Bulanek. She views late-night snacks as "one more way to carry through a theme. Couples often design their weddings to bring in very personal reflections of themselves."

Brides agree that the best thing about serving late-night eats is that you can make your wedding truly your own, using foods that offer a window into your life and personality. Michelle Trotter-Mathison and groom John Mathison love Parkway

Pizza and wanted to incorporate it into their reception at Nicollet Island. Their wedding planner, Sarah Trotter at Lasting Impressions Weddings & Events, arranged for the pizza to be brought directly to the reception site.

"At first I didn't know how it would work—getting these pizza boxes delivered to our wedding," Trotter-Mathison says. "But we decided it would add to the appeal of the late-night snack." The pizza allowed the couple to be more playful than they could be during most of their wedding day.

"I probably do late-night food at 90 percent of the weddings I plan," says Trotter. "Any food goes, and the key is to make sure your message is getting across. For Michelle and John, that message was about the fun times they had eating Parkway Pizza." For others, it's about snacks they loved as children, like cookies and milk or popcorn. Pub and diner food like buffalo wings or hot dogs are also very popular, and portions are deliberately small so guests don't feel like they're gorging into the wee hours.

Erin Scherer and her husband Ben love Izzy's Ice Cream Café in St. Paul, but aren't big fans of wedding cake, so they decided to forgo the cake-cutting ritual and dish up Izzy's instead. Two uniformed servers offered guests a choice of chocolate, peppermint bon bon, strawberry or vanilla ice cream with hot fudge, caramel and raspberry toppings decorated with whipped cream, M&Ms, Reese's Pieces, peanuts and chocolate sprinkles. "Everybody thought it was a great idea, especially on a warm summer night. And the sugar probably kept people going," Scherer says.

Katie Goldstein met her husband-to-be, Nick, in sixth grade, and he later brought her to the State Fair for the first time. He introduced her to 1919 Rootbeer at the fair, and every year, "the root beer stand is the first place we go to have floats," says Goldstein.

When booking their reception at the Saint Paul Hotel, the couple was pleasantly surprised to learn that the hotel offered the very same root beer. "It was cool to be able to have these floats at our reception."

But Goldstein didn't stop at floats. "Weddings are long when you stay the whole night, and you work up an appetite," she says. She chose mini-burgers, chicken tenders and fries to accompany the beverages and found that "it revved everyone up so they had more energy to dance."

For Amber and Mike Darrington, whose reception was at the Minnesota Boat Club on the Mississippi River, late-night snacks were the best part of any wedding. "What do we do when we're all together? We eat late at night," Amber says.

Formerly a culinary director at Whole Foods, she chose chips and salsa because "it's one of our favorite snacks—something we eat almost every day." Guests at the reception feasted on tortilla chips and thick, chunky pico de gallo salsa with chopped tomatoes and peppers. Their caterer, Natalie Carpentier at Mintáhoe, also served black bean dip, guacamole and assorted flatbreads, crostinis and crusty breads topped with leeks and goat cheese, white bean-garlic and sun-dried tomatoes with toasted onion spreads. For dessert, the couple chose mini-cupcakes from La Patisserie in St. Paul.

"Of course it's not just about food," says Trotter. "It's about the presentation." Whatever you choose will be fun and memorable, as long as you remember that late-night eats need only one ingredient to be successful: You. \*

## How to find outside vendors for wedding-day treats

While most caterers provide the entire meal, including late-night eats, they occasionally allow couples to choose off-site vendors for specialties like desserts or pizza. Couples often work with their wedding planners to find them, but we also located a few:

**THE BIG EVENT** This special events company offers cotton candy, popcorn, snow cones or chips with cheese sauce. [thebigecompany.com](http://thebigecompany.com)

**CARNIVAL CONCESSIONS** Owner Bob Jahn will bring popcorn or mini-doughnut machines to your wedding, and can also fry up corn dogs or cheese curds. [carnivalconcessions.com](http://carnivalconcessions.com)

**SUGAR SUGAR** Old-fashioned taffy lives alongside fancier fare like limoncello in white chocolate and marzipan with sea salt at this Minneapolis shop. [sugar-sugarcandy.com](http://sugar-sugarcandy.com)

**OTHER DESSERTS** Brides and wedding planners quoted in this article recommended Coldstone Creamery, Izzy's Ice Cream Café and Sebastian Joe's; chocoholics praised The Funky Chunky in Minneapolis and fans of mini-cupcakes mentioned La Patisserie in St. Paul and Mon Petit Cupcake in Winona.

**BOTTOM LINE** If there's a snack you just can't live without, ask your caterer or reception venue contact if you can bring the food on-site for your late-night treat. If your caterer can't offer your favorites, they might let an outside vendor provide them.

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