

LOCAL

CATIE 2021
BEST SOCIAL DISTANCING INNOVATION

BENTO BOX



SYNOPSIS

Bringing people together to celebrate a common cause...

THIS would become the greatest challenge of 2020.

When The Scout Guide wanted to throw a Launch Party in October of 2020, this very challenge motivated us to deliver a culinary experience creatively AND safely. The event became a Stop-In experience. A limited number of guests could attend, enjoy a beverage or two and savor themed bites during their stay OR take them on the go.

We designed an elevated collection of 'street festival' themed hors d'oeuvres. And we presented them together in a Bento Box for safety, ease of transport and enjoyment.



CONCEPT

The Scout Guide is a publication that highlights the best there is to offer in a city. So the annual Launch party had to exhibit this. This is why we were both thrilled and ready to accept the challenge that came with executing a gathering of any kind in October of 2020.

Goals & Objectives

The overall goal for this event was to do everything we possibly could to ensure everyone felt safe without sacrificing the typical buzz-worthy experience of this annual event.

For starters, we worked to identify what we should and could NOT do before coming up with a solution. We knew that a traditional stationed spread was out of the question. We knew that serving on-site might cause groups to gather in one place and that was not a safe option. We also knew that our offerings had to be served outdoors, rain or shine, and that we would not have the luxury of a controlled environment.

We decided individually portioned servings would be the only way we could successfully achieve our goal of providing a safe experience for our team and guests alike.

Thus, we utilized a disposable and eco-friendly box that allowed us to compartmentalize offerings (much like you would see in a traditional bento box), and offered a clean, modern look. It provided an option for guest to simply stop in, congratulate the Editor, pose for a photo op, and collect issues of the new publication. And most importantly, it provided a flexible option for attendees to enjoy based on their own comfort level — during the event, or to be taken to-go.

Outside of the logistical objectives, our goal was to provide creative cuisine for a group with experienced & sophisticated palettes. In addition, this guest list was notorious for high social media engagement, so we wanted the offering to be worthy of sharing online.



SOCIAL DISTANCING QUALITIES

The street festival theme of the event guided our decision for the type of offering we created, but ultimately the main objective for the entire event and the food we served was ensuring safety.

Event Layout | Movement | Grab & Go Offering | Disposable

When considering the other safety factors that dictated event plans, we knew that the bento box would be the perfect solution for a safe, yet memorable experience.

The fact that we could assemble the boxes in a space away from the actual gathering was key in minimizing our team's interaction with guests. Along the same vein, we also planned for beverages to be individually packaged in order to keep things flowing and to avoid lines. For this same reason, the publication offered a 'sneak peek' tour of the site, which was still under construction. The development was still fairly raw, so providing a tour gave the feeling of exclusivity and encouraged continuous movement throughout the event. Because of this movement, we

were able to forgo seating and instead placed cocktail tables at least six feet apart within the event footprint.

In retrospect, choosing a high-quality, disposable, bento box was not only appropriate for the event, but necessary. It allowed us to eliminate handling and serving interactions typically seen at events that occurred pre-COVID-19 — passing hors d'oeuvres, guests filling plates, or service staff transporting dirty dish or glassware.

Outside of the logistical benefits, the bento box was a fun, new way to present food and gave us the opportunity to customize the appearance with the client brand and ours, while undoubtedly increasing safety.



PRODUCTION

In an effort to create an experience around the food and bento box, we had to handle the creative production prior to the event and focus on the culinary production on-site.

Savory and a Tiny Bit Sweet

To customize the branding of the bento box, we utilized labels to include branding for both The Scout Guide and for ourselves. On the top of the box, we incorporated our own spin within their existing tagline, “LIVE, LOVE, LOCAL”, by overlaying a metallic vinyl letting of the word “eat” before “local”. This showed our support of their brand while also revealing our personal affiliation within the publication. On the inside, we designed a food ‘map’ that coincided with each of the food compartments so that guests were guided on their culinary journey.

When it came to the culinary production, we created three savory hors d’oeuvres and one sweet that we finished and ‘plated’ behind-the-scenes. The hors d’oeuvres were crafted with the client’s theme – street festival – in mind. We served

a Chicken ‘Lollipop’, a Lobster Corndog with mango chutney, a Pretzel & Bratwurst Mini Kolache with beer mustard and a Pumpkin Funnel Cake Waffle with spiced cream cheese frosting. To further play to The Scout Guide’s branding, we made sure to incorporate the color yellow (the featured color on the cover) into each culinary component.

Once they were ready to be served, our professionally-trained, masked and gloved, service team stood nearby the display of pre-filled boxes to distribute to guests. It was easy for guests to take the bento box to a socially distanced cocktail table, take it with them on a tour of the venue OR take home at the end of their ‘Stop-In’ experience. There was also a COVID-19 safety and sanitation officer on-site to ensure our team was staying compliant to city health guidelines.



CHALLENGES

The main challenge for this event was the simple idea of bringing people together to celebrate during a global pandemic. Ensuring safety was the top priority but there were some other secondary challenges that we had to overcome as well.

Weather | Construction | Objectives

When hosting an outdoor event, weather is always an unknown factor that requires a plan of action for added shelter, or in this case, a heat source. The location of the event was another challenge, as it was partially a construction site, so prep space was limited and raw and yet another safety risk we had to take into account.

There were a few creative challenges as well. As previously noted, it took research and testing to find the right product in which we could present creative fare, to ensure the experience was still high-end and worthy of sharing on social media.



Pictured on the left: Top social media shares during the event.

