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Banquet Food Transformed, with **Chef Nick Calias**
25 Wow Ideas for Meals, Breaks, Receptions
Chef Thais: Culture-to-Table Cuisine
Understanding **F&B Guarantees**

Chef Nicholas Calias, from Boston's Colonnade Hotel:
"If we can't make banquet food as good as restaurant food, it doesn't go on the menu."

F&B The Fresh Ideas Gallery

Honey Bee Break

Plenty of hotels have chef-influenced gardens, but how many have a honeybee habitat? At The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, up to 200,000 bees produce more than 400 gallons of honey yearly, and are the inspiration for a hyper-local and highly educational honeybee break for groups. Beekeeper Michael Lynch uses a honeycomb

housed in an acrylic display case (pictured) to talk about the honey-making process, explain the health benefits of local honey, and guide guests on a honey tasting. "Not only was this a wow experience, but I hadn't realized that local honey could strengthen my immune system," says Lauren Andrews, director of site selection, Meeting Expectations. She now sweetens her tea at home with local honey.



Creating Instagram-friendly food and beverage events is a

conscious strategy for Liz Klostermann, conference manager, Meeting Expectations. Even on a tight budget, she says, there are things you can do to help attendees get better photos and more likes on their social streams. For instance, Klostermann recommends nostalgic food items that are hugely popular on Instagram, such as cotton candy and mac and cheese. She also prefers open-shelving vertical furniture instead of standard buffet tables, not only because they are space-savers, but also because their height provides the best backdrop for instagram-ready selfies and portraits.

Hydroponic Salad Station

Heading to a group reception at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, Lauren Andrews, director of site selection, Meeting Expectations, heard what sounded like a distant waterfall. As she got closer, she realized the sound was coming from an automatic mister at a



hydroponic lettuce station. **Heads of locally-grown lettuces still in their growing containers were displayed in a farm-stand setup and kept fresh by the mister.** A chef explained the process

and clipped the desired lettuce when selected. The idea originated at a Meet the Farmers Dinner at the hotel's Coast Restaurant—reflecting a trend of hotels adopting innovative restaurant ideas for group F&B.



Perfect Pairs

Self-titled “chocolo- gist” and pastry chef Wouter Tjeertes recently introduced a tasting of house-made chocolates paired with select spirits at the Hyatt Ziva and Hyatt Zilara resorts in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Scalable for different sized groups, the tasting showcases unexpected flavor combinations using local ingredients, with commentary by Chef Tjeertes that explains the artistic process. Think smoked sea-salt and chipotle truffles paired with Appleton VX, a Jamaican aged sipping rum. Each spirit complements the creamy, not-too-sweet chocolates that have surprisingly layered flavors as they melt in your mouth.