TACO BAR MASTER PREP & SHOPPING CHECKLIST
TacoBarCalculator.com - Commercial Catering & Food Safety Guidelines

1. EVENT PREP TIMELINE SCHEDULE

[ ] T-Minus 2 Days: Finalize headcounts, purchase canned goods, dry spices, paper goods, & drinks.
[ ] T-Minus 2 Days: Clean and test slow cookers, chafing warmers, and insulated tortilla holders.
[ ] T-Minus 1 Day: Purchase fresh meats, produce cilantro, limes, lettuce, and dairy products.
[ ] T-Minus 1 Day: Pre-chop onions, grate cheeses, and prepare marinades. Store in airtight containers.
[ ] Morning Of: Slow cook meats shredded chicken, carnitas or brown seasoned ground beef.
[ ] Morning Of: Prepare Mexican rice, black beans, and fresh pico de gallo.
[ ] 1 Hour Before: Heat holding chafers to 140 F. Place sour cream and salsas over ice trays.
[ ] 15 Mins Before: Warm tortillas in foil pouches 250 F oven for 15 mins and place in warmers.

2. ESSENTIAL BUFFET ORDER & LOGISTICS

Station 1: 9-inch Heavy Dinner Plates & Tortilla Warmers Keep utensils strictly at the END.
Station 2: Warm Sides - Mexican Rice & Seasoned Pinto/Black Beans Filling carbs reduce meat cost 20%.
Station 3: Hot Meats - Seasoned Ground Beef, Shredded Chicken, Carnitas Held at 140 F minimum.
Station 4: Warm Sauces - Warm Queso Blanco & Fajita Sliced Peppers.
Station 5: Cold Toppings on Ice - Shredded Jack/Cheddar, Diced Tomatoes, Lettuce, Sour Cream, Guac.
Station 6: Salsas, Fresh Cilantro, Lime Wedges, Hot Sauces Cholula, Valentina.
Station 7: Heavy Napkins & Plastic Cutlery Exit Station.

3. PORTION BENCHMARKS (PER ADULT GUEST)

- Tacos per Adult: 3 standard tacos Light lunch: 2 tacos | Heavy eaters/athletes: 4 tacos
- Raw Meat Needed: 7.5 to 8 oz raw meat per guest accounts for ~22% cooking shrinkage
- Cooked Meat Yield: 5 to 6 oz cooked meat per guest approx. 2 oz meat per taco
- Tortillas / Shells: 3 to 4 tortillas per guest add 15% buffer for broken shells
- Shredded Cheese: 1.0 to 1.5 oz blend per guest buy 1 lb per 10 to 12 guests
- Salsa & Guacamole: 2 to 3 oz total combined per guest
- Paper Goods: 1.2 plates and 2.5 napkins per guest