

# SAXTYS

## Christmas Party Frequently Asked Questions

We understand that sometimes reading our terms and conditions, people might ask “why” things have to be done a certain way, and also we do get asked some very common questions each year. Our events and management team are really experienced in organising Christmas parties and much of the way we do things is borne out of many years of running Christmas Parties and the associated administration that brings. We so often meet many party organisers who tell us similar things and so we have put this list together to hopefully answer many of your queries now.

- **Why do I have to pay in advance?**

*Christmas is a key time for any food and drink business and we are often oversubscribed for key December nights. Also, we really want to provide a nice experience and so the costs for providing the meal ingredients, preparation, general staffing, plus table accessories and entertainments are all higher than normal. In our experience, if parties have not prepaid, then too many “no shows” occur, which can leave us substantially out of pocket, plus we would have turned other groups away unnecessarily. We are only a small independent business and so we have to ensure our costs are met and our bookings are guaranteed.*

- **Why are my deposits and payments not refundable?**

*For similar reasons above, we have to ensure our costs are covered and help our party organisers by getting committed numbers for each party. It takes quite a degree of planning to ensure we can seat all our parties to maximise the covers we can seat and so we need to ensure all bookings are guaranteed, which over the years has meant us taking a much firmer line on payments and deposits and not refunding payments for cancelled parties or individuals.*

- **Will you cancel my reservation if payments are not received?**

*If no payments are received by the specified deadline (normally two weeks from booking) then yes, we will cancel the reservation to ensure we are not turning other groups away. Christmas is a key time for us and we cannot afford to have empty tables from unconfirmed bookings. If you are struggling to get a payment to us by the deadline, then please talk to us, and we can negotiate dates and payment times.*

- **What if I need a little longer to collect deposits?**

*Let us know! We can try and negotiate an extension to the deadline, but if we do not know we cannot help. Please just keep us informed or you do risk losing your booking!*

- **What if someone doesn't turn up on the day?**

*Regretfully, they will lose their payment. The food will still be served and so the party organiser has a choice as to whether they share the food out or can try and fill the place last minute with another person (who would have the original meal choices.)*

- **Why can't party members pay individually direct to you?**

*We account for every payment we receive thoroughly with our experienced admin systems. Logging and processing each deposit and final payment takes time but it is time we are happy to spend to make sure everything is carefully recorded and accounted for and that you know your payments are taken care of. However, to process individual payments would amount to a considerable level of man hours just logging and sorting them out and wouldn't be cost effective for us. Plus if individual party members are dropping in small payments or calling to pay via card at any time of day or night, there is an increased risk of these payments going astray and not being correctly logged. By asking party organisers to co-ordinate and make one payment for deposits and one payment for the balance to us, it keeps things much more manageable and we can track everything more thoroughly. Banks charge us for each cheque banked and each credit card transaction. If we allowed individual cheque payments it could amount to 100s of £s in bank costs which is why we insist on one cheque per party payment (we do not charge any extra for a single cheque payment.) Organisers can pay via cash, debit or \*credit card, or a single cheque for the whole party, or even by BACS. Just call us for all the options and BACS details if you would prefer this method. If an additional person has to be added on, again, it is much better for us to have that co-ordinated through the party organiser to make sure we all have the correct information.*

- **Why are credit cards charged 2% extra\*?**

*This is down to the transaction costs unfortunately. We do absorb this the rest of the year on individual transactions, but costs really do mount up very quickly at Christmas with large payments. There is always the options of BACS, Cheque, cash or debit card instead.*

- **Can we pay via BACS or Invoice?**

*BACS is no problem. In fact we encourage this wherever possible. You can pay as soon as you have collected all your party payments into one account, or via a company account and at your convenience. Especially if you are based out of town. We normally ask you to give us a ref number using the date of the party and 3 letters pertaining to the name / initials the party is booked under, such as “121216SAX” to enable our accountant to track the payments. Just ping us an email too to let us know payment has been made. If you require invoices for advance payments, then please let us know as soon as possible (or on booking by providing us with full details for invoicing) and our accountant can prepare a vat invoice for you. We normally require a minimum of 48 hours' notice to get the invoice prepared. We regret that we cannot invoice for payments to be made after the party. Everything must be paid for in advance. The exception is some drinks tabs in pre-agreed circumstances, please see this section below.*

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- **Can you cater for large corporate events?**

*Absolutely! We love events! We have a late licence every night in December and can do whatever you want (within acceptable reason!) Private hire, buffets, DJs, entertainments, magicians, photographers, licensed Security staff, you tell us what you are looking for and we will do our best to help. We tailor your event to what you want and will give you a bespoke quotation based on your requirements. The only restrictions we have are on Fridays and Saturday Nights when we do have to open up to the public after 10.30pm.*

- **What happens if the weather is really bad and we cannot make the party?**

*In EXCEPTIONAL bad weather scenarios, such as the snowfall of 2010/2011, we appreciate that sometimes not everyone can make a party. However we still have to cover our staff and building costs and we have still purchased and prepared food etc which will inevitably go to waste. We normally charge a nominal re-booking fee and offer alternative January dates for the party. This is a very last resort though as in most cases, many parties are still able to go ahead.*

- **What if my booking is last minute?**

*That's no problem, but we will have to insist on full payment asap after making the reservation to secure the date and we will need a pre-order of food very quickly from your party to enable our kitchen to prepare.*

- **What if one of my party will be late for the food service time?**

*On busy nights, we do have to serve all parties during the same time window. We actually only have a little kitchen and do not have the space to serve different courses or different parties at staggered times. Whilst we can exercise some discretion – especially on quieter nights – it isn't fair on other parties to keep everyone waiting for someone to arrive from a different party. The food service will commence at the allotted time whenever possible and depending on the numbers we are serving that night may take 10-15 minutes to cover all parties. After the course has been served, we may be able to hold back a "plate" for the person running late, provided you let us know, but we cannot guarantee the quality of the food will be the same if it has been sat for a while. Please note that we cannot serve any food after 9.30pm as shortly after this we will start preparing areas for dancing.*

- **What if I want to add someone at the last minute?**

*Talk to us first – wherever we can we will try to fit someone in provided we can accommodate them on your table(s) and you have the payment and pre-order ready for us but we cannot make an absolute guarantee- every night and party is different.*

- **How do I know you won't take our money and go bust like other venues have done?**

*We realise this is a sensitive area for some. All we can say is that Saxtys has been running for 40 years, through various changes, economic times and trends. The current family ownership have been at the helm since December 2001 and we can assure you we are an experienced, capable team and have no intention of going anywhere any time soon.*

- **Can we all sit together?**

*To all intents and purposes yes, just not necessarily on the same exact table if there are a lot of you. Any parties larger than 10 will normally be split across 2 adjacent tables, simply because that's the size we can fit on one table! We use a mixture of round tables and rectangle tables, the rounds seat 10 and the rectangles vary but we have to leave gaps between tables so the staff can serve you. Both table types have their plus and minus points, but we won't mix you up in different areas of the building – you will always be adjacent to each other, within easy sight and chatting distance. The exception to this maybe if you need to add extra people last minute or you book last minute, in which case we will let you know before you confirm if we only have split areas or different areas available.*

- **Can we specify where in the building we sit or can you let us know where we will be seated?**

*Unfortunately not. We need to have maximum flexibility to make the tables "work" and any experienced party organiser will know numbers will always fluctuate. We are governed by an interesting quirky building with different rooms and settings. We love it all, but people's preferences for the different areas can be very subjective. We want everyone to have fun and enjoy good food and service in a happy atmosphere so we just ask that you can allow us to seat all of our parties the very best way we can to make sure everyone can be accommodated. Therefore we do not make any promises as to location. The exception is with quieter days or nights and if your party meets the minimum number requirements for one of our function rooms. Let us know if you want a private room and we can look at the possibilities for you.*

- **I have a member of my party in a wheelchair, or with limited mobility, can they be accommodated?**

*Absolutely! Just please let us know on booking as we have a mix of high and low seating so we need to ensure we seat our guests in the right place to ensure their comfort and safety. We have an accessible toilet and the building is flat through the ground floor with a shallow ramp to the function room. Taxis and vehicle drop offs are permitted outside the front of the premises after 4.30pm and the rear of the premises is also fully accessible from the car park at the rear which does have 2 disabled spaces. Please let us know if you have any questions.*

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- **How long can we keep our table for?**

*Unless you have a private event, all areas of the building are accessible to the public from 10.30pm (Champagne bar 11pm) – which is usually a good hour after most people have finished eating. In areas where we have a DJ, tables will need to be cleared away to allow this to happen. Hopefully by this stage you will be ready for some dancing, but please understand that these tables do have to be cleared and if having a table all night to sit on is of paramount importance, perhaps we may not be the venue for you. We will be open until the early hours of the morning though, so once your table is cleared, you are welcome to stay with us all night! We recommend if you have coats with you that they are placed in our cloakroom. This is free for party guests during food service but is chargeable for patrons arriving later on, so we suggest making the most of it being free when you first arrive for your meal. If your table is in the front of our venue and is not cleared away, it is yours for as long as you are sat on it, but we cannot hold on to it for you or prevent members of the public from sitting in vacant seats. For Lunchtime and afternoon table bookings, the maximum reservation time is 2 hours. We need to be able to reset the table for later parties but you will be very welcome to remain in our front bar.*

- **Is there a DJ and dancing? What time does it start?**

*Yes and yes every Friday, Saturday and a few other key nights! Our DJs normally start at around 10.30pm and will play all night until we close in the small hours (please see our separate opening hours' notice.) Our Christmas brochure gives the days we will have extra DJ nights in addition to the usual Fridays and Saturdays. Please though, be aware that the venue is open to the public by then. On the busiest nights we will have two rooms and 2 DJs playing with a fantastic mix of tunes for dancing. If you are booking a large private function, then there are options for private DJ hire earlier on.*

- **Why can we only book from the special Christmas Menus and not your normal menu?**

*Due to the volume of meals served and people to cater for, we have to restrict our menus and for parties this means offering everyone the same special Christmas Menu. By keeping the menu reduced and asking for pre-orders, this restricts needless waste and makes sure we have your meal in stock. Our experienced Kitchen team put a lot of thought into each dish and try and source the best ingredients to make a menu that you will love. Those ingredients are ordered fresh, prepared and cooked each day to the pre-orders you have given us so we can offer you the very best food and service. We do still run our normal menu at quieter times and for casual diners, but we cannot take bookings for this menu or guarantee every item's availability. Dining times may also be restricted on this.*

- **Why are your Food and Drink deals not available in December?**

*Some are at certain times, but for the same reasons as above, we have to restrict what we can offer – especially on really busy nights, to make sure we can do what we are doing, well.*

- **Why must I pre-order my food?**

*Your pre-order makes sure we can serve lots of hungry party goers at the same time and ensures we have the food available. It also helps prevent needless waste and keeps service as efficient as possible. On busy nights we can cater for over 100 covers simultaneously in our little kitchen, with a small but hardworking team, provided we have the orders in ready. That's a lot of prep work to do and meals to organise so we do need to know in advance. We also have to ensure we can place orders with our suppliers well in advance which is why we ask for your pre-order two weeks before the party date. All the orders are collated for each day so our kitchen knows exactly how many meals to order for and prepare for.*

- **How can I pre-order wine?**

*That's easy, let us know you want to pre-order and we will ensure you have the most up to date wine list. If you pre-order something that goes out of stock (sometimes our suppliers get caught out too!) we will replace it with something of an equivalent taste / quality. If you want something special that is not on the list, please ask us. We also have an online wine business and can certainly try and source something special for you, but anything ordered "off list" will need to be prepaid and it is likely we will only hold the exact amount you order.*

- **Can I arrange a drinks tab?**

*Yes, provided you let us know in advance. We cannot arrange large tabs on the night without prior notice. Smaller tabs are fine, but large parties or groups any bigger than 10 need to be pre-arranged with the bill payer's name and contact details in advance. All drinks tabs must be paid for and cleared by 10.30pm on that night before we open to the public. We cannot invoice after the event. The exception to this is large corporate parties with special arrangements made in advance. We normally ask what restrictions will apply to larger tabs to ensure only permitted drinks are allowed onto the tab. We recommend with larger dining parties that just one or two people are named to order bottles of wine or large volumes to ensure there is no dispute on payment.*

- **Can I ensure certain items only are available on my drinks tab?**

*Yes, again this is best arranged in advance with us. We can restrict certain products and also we recommend specifying one or two named persons to order bottles of wine or champagne etc.*

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- **I have food allergies or dietary requirements, what can I eat?**

*We do provide an allergy listing but everyone is different and we understand there are differences between medical condition defined food restrictions, food intolerances and lifestyle choices. For Coeliacs for instance, all food cooked in our fryer is unsuitable as it is also used for breaded goods. However someone who doesn't wish to eat wheat but is not a coeliac could still have chips cooked in the fryer as the chips themselves do not contain wheat. You tell us what you can and cannot eat and we will advise you accordingly. We cannot always substitute like for like "free from" products but we will do our very best to source or make alternatives where we can. We can usually provide Gluten free bread, crackers, Yorkshire puddings and gravy amongst other things, or make alternative dishes from scratch. We have even been asked if someone could bring their own gravy in a flask as they like how they make it. Of course! We just want you to enjoy your meal with us. One thing that should be noted is that nuts are present in our kitchen. Our team will do their utmost to prevent cross contamination but we do ask that anyone with a severely sensitive allergy is aware that the kitchen is not a nut free environment. We have had very sensitive persons dine with us previously with no issues but everyone is different.*

- **One of my party doesn't like anything on the menu, what can they eat?**

*Talk to us and tell us what they like and we'll do our best to help – our chefs are pretty good!*

- **Do you have Vegan friendly wine?**

*Not all the time, but we can on occasion source it. Let us know and we can try and pre-order some for you.*

- **I have someone who has changed their mind, can I change the pre-order?**

*If the order is within the two week deadline before your party date and has already gone to the kitchen, it's not ideal as all the orders are collated together but by all means ask. We can try and change it for you but can't promise. Please just bear in mind the more last minute changes there are, the higher the margin for error. If it is within 48 hours of your party, generally it is not possible not as the orders will have been placed with our suppliers.*

- **I have someone who has dropped out but another who has replaced them, can I change the pre-order?**

*Similar to the previous question – please ask us. We will do what we can, but if it is very close to the party date, that person may have to have their predecessor's order.*

- **What if my party members forget what they have ordered?**

*We recommend you keeping a copy of the order with the names of who has ordered what food to remind everyone. We will also put a copy of the table, please encourage your party guests to use it and not just take anything they fancy as the food comes out. We will prep and serve the correct amount of meals for your party and if someone has taken the wrong food, another guest will inevitably be disappointed.*

- **Can one of my party members bring in their food order and money separately?**

*We do prefer everything to come through the party organiser to ensure it is all traceable and avoid errors. We can make an exception for the odd "extra" party member, but the main pre-order must all be collated and brought in or sent to us by the party organiser, we provide a sheet for you for this.*

- **Someone is running late, can you keep their meal back?**

*In exceptional circumstances yes, but we will have to plate it as we need to have the space in the kitchen. That person may have to wait until there is a gap in service to receive their food, and we cannot guarantee the quality if it has been sat for a while. Please also note that we cannot serve any food after 9.30pm as shortly after this we will start preparing areas for dancing.*

- **I am having a buffet night, but I want seating for everyone, can this be arranged?**

*It depends on your numbers but for parties over the size of our listed maximum seated then no. We have limited space and if you also want room for dancing, this restricts tables still further. If you are looking for an informal drinks and buffet reception then we would suggest that tables are not needed for everyone and the less tables there are, the more people can circulate.*

- **Can we book a room privately?**

*Yes, subject to minimum number arrangements. If numbers drop below the minimum, then the minimum number is that payable. For private parties we can accommodate the following numbers:*

- **Full Venue:** up to 500 buffet style, minimum numbers subject to date and overall requirements. May be subject to time / date restrictions. Please contact us in the first instance with possible dates and your ideas.
- **Library Bar:** Maximum 300 buffet style or 70 seated dining. Minimum numbers for dining are 50, minimum for our buffet menu is 60 on quieter nights, 100 on Friday / Saturday nights.
- **Champagne Bar:** Maximum 45 Buffet style or 30 seated dining. Minimum 25 people for either arrangement.

*Depending on dates, numbers and what you want, we can be flexible with menus and arrangements, however we are subject to more restrictions on key trading nights and may have to add room hire charges.*

*We have much more flexibility with Sunday - Wednesday nights. We are always open to new ideas so if you have something special and a little different in mind for your event, please call us for an informal chat to see what we can arrange for you. We can tailor make all our parties to suit each individual company or group and are more than happy to explore various options with you. Please contact us to find out more.*

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- **How many can be seated in one party?**

*Please refer to the previous section and the question "can we all sit together"*

- **Can we hire the venue exclusively all night?**

*On certain dates and subject to minimum numbers and possible a hire fee, yes. Let us know what you are planning and we can quote from there.*

- **Is there a cloakroom?**

*Yes, it is free on arrival to party guests but is £2 per item once we are open to the public later on.*

- **We want to leave after eating to go for a few drinks elsewhere, but come back later, is that possible?**

*Yes that is fine, but please bear in mind on nights we are charging admission from 11pm, the following conditions will apply:*

- *We can put you on the guest list or give you a free entry card / wristband.*
- *Only the names on the list or wearing the band or in possession of the card get free entry, additional guests will have to pay.*
- *Returning entry is limited to one permitted free entry. After this, if the guest leaves and returns, the admission charge will be payable. If in exceptional circumstances you must leave, such as to accompany someone to a taxi or take them home but you are returning, please let our doorstaff know to ensure you are re-admitted free at their discretion.*
- *Please bear in mind if you leave and return later on, you may have to queue for re-entry due to our permitted capacity limits. We cannot give queue jump priority to anyone, and we do expect to hit capacity on key nights. The capacity is a condition of our licence and we will not waive permitted limits under any circumstances.*
- *We have conditions of entry as we are a late night venue. Our doorstaff have the discretion to act on the behalf of the owner to refuse entry to any persons that they feel are incapacitated or for whatever other reason should not be admitted to the venue. They will also ask patrons already in the venue who no longer meet these conditions to leave. In many circumstances, this is for the guest's own safety as well as the safety and comfort of other patrons. Any threatening or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.*

- **What if I have an under 18 in my party?**

*Persons aged under 18 are very welcome to join our Christmas parties, until the point we open to the public, provided they are under the stewardship of a responsible adult. Please bear in mind the following licensing laws:*

- *It is illegal for someone under 18 to buy alcohol, attempt to buy alcohol or to be sold alcohol.*
- *It is illegal for an adult to buy alcohol for someone under 18 for consumption on licensed premises, except as below.*
- *It is illegal for someone under 18 to drink alcohol in licensed premises, except where the child is 16 or 17 years old and accompanied by an adult. In this case it is legal for them to drink, (but not buy,) beer, wine and cider with a table meal.*

*We reserve the right to refuse the sale of alcohol to anyone who cannot produce suitable ID proving their age or to an adult if they're accompanied by a child and we think the alcohol is being bought for the child with the exception of table service as specified above.*

*We reserve the right to remove alcohol from a table completely if we have reason to believe an under 18 year old is intoxicated. We politely request that any under 18s vacate the premises by 10.30pm at the latest and that suitable arrangements are made to get under 18s safely home. We do not wish to have to forcibly ask under 18s to leave the premises and would be grateful for your assistance in ensuring children are looked after.*

- **What if someone in our party is on your banned list or on the Herefordshire HAND ban scheme?**

*As per our entry conditions, they will not be permitted entry to the premises under any circumstances.*