

# Frequently Asked Questions

## WEDDINGS AT THE ROSAMOND GIFFORD ZOO

*Thank you for considering us for your special day.  
Below are answers to questions that may come up as you make your plans  
and wonder what to expect.*

### **Do you have a minimum number of guests for weddings at the zoo?**

Yes, our minimum guaranteed guest count is 50 people.

### **What is the capacity of the catering facility at the zoo?**

Our Banquet Room comfortably seats up to 200 guests for a buffet style dinner, however we have custom indoor and outdoor solutions for larger events. Call our Catering Sales Team to discuss capacity options.

### **We are considering the zoo for our wedding. Do we need an appointment or can we just drop in?**

An appointment is required to view our venue. Our event calendar tends to be very busy and our banquet room may be in use by another client if you drop in unexpectedly. One of our event coordinators would be happy to give you a detailed tour and answer any questions you might have.

### **Can we bring in an outside caterer?**

Catering at the Zoo is a full service in-house catering facility and we do not accommodate outside caterers. Our Executive Chef will personally oversee your menu and ensure it exceeds your expectations. We do allow an outside bakery of your choice to provide specialized cakes or other desserts.

### **I have a lot of guests on special diets. Can dietary restrictions be accommodated for my reception?**

With advance notice, we are happy to work with you to try to accommodate special dietary requests.

### **I'm nervous about choosing our menu. Can we do a tasting?**

Yes. We offer private tastings in January for the upcoming wedding season. The tastings are complimentary for up to four guests including you and your partner. Each additional guest will be \$25 per person plus service charge and sales tax. If you are planning a buffet or plated dinner you will have the opportunity to sample your menu choices before submitting your final selection to your event coordinator.

### **Can we bring our own alcohol in for the reception?**

Catering at the Zoo offers a full-service bar option. Our liquor license does not allow outside alcohol to be brought in. Liquor brought in to the facility will be subject to confiscation.

### **What are my bar options?**

OPEN BAR: the host pays for the guest drinks at a set price per hour

CASH BAR: the guests pay for their own drinks

Your bar is available for up to 4 hours during a wedding. Your coordinator will help you compare the various options and decide what works best for your budget.

### **We love animals! What parts of the zoo can we see at our wedding?**

In addition to all access to any of the areas you have reserved for your event, we offer custom meet and mingle animal experiences available that will make your wedding unforgettable. Call our Catering Sales Team today to inquire!

### **Sounds amazing! How do I book my wedding at the zoo?**

If you're interested in booking your big day at the zoo, contact our event team to set up a tour of our facilities and check the availability of your desired date. You can reach our team at [events@rosamondgiffordzoo.org](mailto:events@rosamondgiffordzoo.org) or call Stephanie Brooks at (315) 435-8511 x8543. An appointment is required to tour our facilities. Your event coordinator will put together a proposal for your approval. If the proposal is acceptable, we'll draw up a contract and our receipt of the signed contract and deposit will lock in your date.

### **What if I change my mind about our menu or other details after I sign my contract?**

No problem at all... our contract is intended to reserve the date for your event. All other details – facilities, bar and menu options can be modified as you work through the planning process. The deadline for changes to your event is 2 months prior to the wedding and your final guaranteed guest count is due 14 business days before the big day.

**What is your payment schedule for weddings?**

To reserve your date, we require a non-refundable \$2,000 deposit and a signed contract. The deposit will be applied to your final billing. Please refer to the deposit schedule in our wedding packet and it will also be included in your contract. The final balance is due 7 days prior to the wedding and must be paid with either cash or credit card. You are welcome to make weekly or monthly payments if you wish.

**What is the service charge on my contract?**

A 21% service charge is automatically added to food and beverage sales on the contract. The service charge covers all the staffing needs and behind the scenes planning and orchestration for your event. A portion of this charge is also paid out as a gratuity to our service staff. By law, 8% sales tax is added, unless your organization is tax exempt.

**When is my final guest count due?**

Your guaranteed guest count is due by 10 a.m. 14 business days before the wedding. Your final invoice will be based on that number.

**I've never done this before and I'm not even sure what questions I should be asking. How will I know if I'm missing something important?**

Our event coordinator's job is to make sure your wedding goes perfectly. We will guide you through the entire planning process. Once your wedding is booked, your coordinator will review our Wedding Planning Timeline with you. We will be available by phone or email should any questions arise during the planning process. We will schedule your tasting, design your timeline for the day, coordinate with your vendors and supervise the room set up and décor. We will meet with you two weeks prior to the wedding to review all the final details. We will be onsite during the wedding, supervising the banquet captain, directing guests throughout the evening and keeping the schedule on track. Our goal is to make sure you and family are able to relax and enjoy the evening.

**What is your policy on same sex weddings?**

We welcome all loving couples regardless of sexual orientation, color, or creed.

**I grew up in Syracuse, but live out of state now. I would love to get married in my hometown – can you help me plan my wedding long distance?**

Yes, we often work with brides planning their weddings from other parts of the country. We can adjust our regular planning timelines to accommodate your visits to Syracuse.

**Do I have to use vendors from your preferred vendor list?**

We highly encourage our couples to choose from our provided list, however we allow you to use the vendor of your choice. If you are interested in a DJ who is not on our preferred vendor list you must have a *written* approval from your event coordinator prior to signing a contract to ensure they meet Catering at the Zoo standards. All vendors must be properly insured, and DJs and photographers are encouraged to schedule a site visit prior to the wedding.

**Can I have live entertainment?**

Yes. Bands need to be "self-contained" with their own speakers, sound board, PA Rack, extension cords, power strips, gaffers tape and microphones. For the safety of your guests, all electrical cords must be taped to the floor with gaffers tape.

**Can we use an iPod for our music?**

We do have a sound system that is compatible with an iPod, but it's more suitable for background music for smaller events. For larger evening events, we recommend hiring a DJ or band for best results.

**Can I do a rehearsal the night before the wedding?**

We do offer a complimentary 30 minute ceremony rehearsal the night before your wedding. The rehearsal space is based on availability. Officiants are required to attend any ceremony rehearsals to ensure he/she and your event coordinator have consistent information.

**I would love to have some photos taken of us with the zoo animals, but I'm not renting the entire zoo.****Is there a way I can do that?**

Yes. Our couples often have their "first look" at the zoo the afternoon of the wedding while the zoo is open to the public, followed by photographs on the trails and at the animal exhibits before the zoo closes.

**Are there restrictions on photography or videography?**

Photographers must follow zoo rules, stay on the path and obey posted signs. Flash is prohibited where indicated. Photographers have access to areas of the zoo reserved for the event only.

**How long before my wedding should I book my date?**

Weddings typically book one to two years before the date, but if you are flexible with your desired date we can often accommodate shorter timelines. Our team will be happy to check the availability of prospective wedding dates.

**Is there a charge for parking at the zoo?**

No – parking is always free and we can accommodate over 600 vehicles.

**Can the zoo accommodate guests with mobility challenges?**

Yes. The zoo, our banquet room and Courtyard are handicapped accessible. We have wheelchairs available for our guests and designated handicapped parking spots in both our main lot and the employee parking lot.

**Some of my guests are smokers. Is smoking allowed at the zoo?**

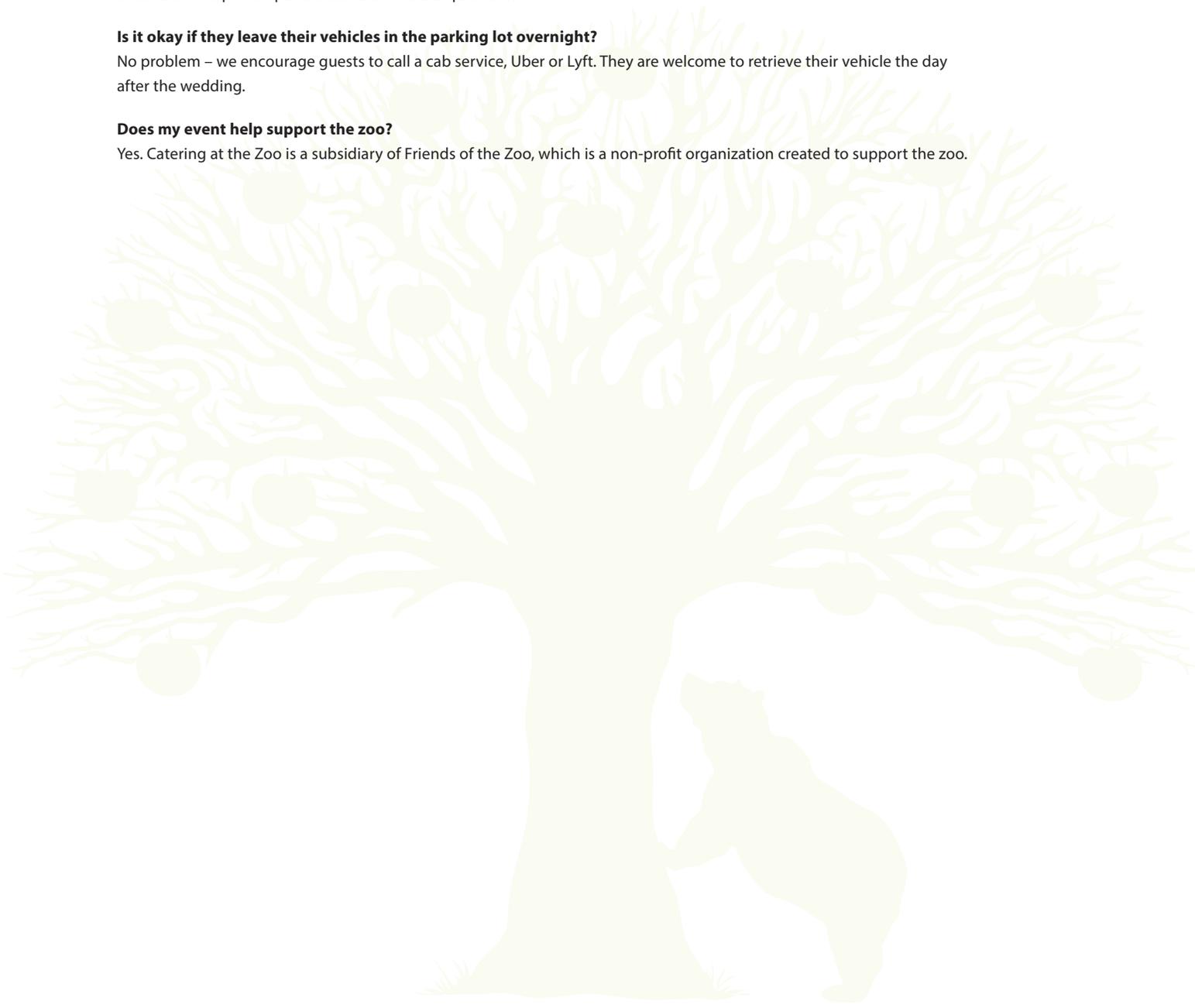
We are a non-smoking facility; smoking is not allowed in the building or near the entrance. We do have a designated smoking area located on the private patio located off the banquet room.

**Is it okay if they leave their vehicles in the parking lot overnight?**

No problem – we encourage guests to call a cab service, Uber or Lyft. They are welcome to retrieve their vehicle the day after the wedding.

**Does my event help support the zoo?**

Yes. Catering at the Zoo is a subsidiary of Friends of the Zoo, which is a non-profit organization created to support the zoo.



**CATERING AT THE ZOO**