Terms and Jargon

Below is a list of terms and jargon commonly used in a restaurant (per the Scott Joseph Serving Course), which would be beneficial to become familiar with:

1. **À la carte** — A French term that means “by the card,” it is used to identify an ordering process whereby the customers pick and choose from among all the items on the menu to comprise their meal.
2. **All day** — is used by the expeditor when expressing a verbal count of a particular item that must be cooked. “All day” is like saying “altogether”.

Ex. There might be 3 orders placed by different tables that require a side of vegetables while there is also a separate side order of vegetables from another table. The Expeditor would tell the kitchen “I need 4 vegetables all day!” This keeps the kitchen organized and helps prevent them from cooking the incorrect amount of a particular item.

1. **Apps** — Appetizers. You might also hear appies.
2. **Bev Nap** — A beverage napkin, usually a small, square paper one.
3. **Big top** — A large table, usually more than six guests.
4. **Bump Bar** – Refers to a programmable keypad that is used in the kitchen to bump food off the line when a kitchen display system is installed.
5. **Bump it** – To remove an order from the cook screen once it is made.
6. **Buried** — Also known as “in the weeds,” it’s when a waiter is overwhelmed and falling behind with taking orders and getting food out.
7. **Bussing** — Term used for clearing off and resetting tables after guests have left.
8. **Campers** — Guests who linger long after the meal has ended, making it difficult to “turn the table.” This is a derogative term and should not be used in front of customers.
9. **Comp** — Short for either complimentary or compensatory; to give something free. Usually authorized by a manager to impress important guests or to make amends for a problem that occurred. If the manager tells you to “comp table five’s apps” it means to not charge for the appetizers.
10. **Cover** — A customer served. “We did 15 covers at lunch.”
11. **Deuce** — Two customers; a table with two seats. Also, two-top.
12. **Dead Plate** – A plate that’s been in the window and under heat lamps for much too long.
13. **Double** – Refers to a waiter or waitress shift when they work two shifts in a row.
14. **Double seat** —Have two tables, and thus two sets of guests, seated at the same time, possibly throwing your pacing off kilter. A prelude to being in the weeds.
15. **Drop** – Start cooking an order item.
16. **Drop the check** — To present the final bill to the guests. You might say to the host stand that you just dropped the check on table 12, indicating that the table will soon be available (unless, of course, they turn into campers).
17. **Early birds** — People who dine early in the shift. They are intended to bring in business early to get an extra table turn before the evening’s rush.
18. **Eighty-six** —If the kitchen runs out of a particular dish, the dish is “86.”
19. **Expeditor** — Expo for short, ensure kitchen orders are prepared in a timely manner. They check the orders for accuracy and serve as liaisons between cooks, waiters and customers. They are responsible for final garnishes on a plate and collecting all the dishes in an order to go out to the table. Also known as the “wheelman”
20. **Fire** — Fire is an instruct to begin cooking an order: “Fire two mahi.”
21. **Four top** —A table that seats four guests.
22. **Line** – The line is the area that divides the cooks from the waitstaff. It is where the food is placed to await pickup.
23. **On the Fly** - When something unexpected has to be cooked urgently, like when a mistake is made in an order or additional items are needed.
24. **Party** – Refers to a group of restaurant guests.
25. **Plating –** Arranging the food on the plate. This includes adding any sauce or garnish before handing over to the expeditor or the server.
26. **Push-it** – Means to sell it.

Ex. “Make sure you push the wine pairings. We have more wine than food right now.”

1. **Reach-in** — A refrigerator, either standard height or under a counter, that you reach in to get something, as opposed to a walk-in refrigerator or freezer.
2. **Reset** — To prepare a recently vacated table for another party of guests. This includes: table condiments in place, silverware reset, etc.
3. **Run** – To bring something to a table. “Run this food to table 4.”
4. **Runner** – Someone needed to “run” food to a table.
5. **Sections** - Most restaurant dining rooms are divided into sections, and each section goes to particular waitstaff each shift.
6. **Setup** — The initial place setting usually consisting of knife, fork and spoon, sometimes the napkin and glassware.
7. **Sidework** — Duties assigned to servers to be performed at the end of a shift. These might include refilling salt and pepper shakers; emptying the ice bin; wiping down counters; or any number of other tasks.
8. **Stretch it** – Making the most of an ingredient.
9. **Slammed** — Having all tables in your station seated at once.
10. **Stiffed** — If a party leaves the restaurant without leaving a tip, you’ve been stiffed.
11. **Sub** – To substitute one menu item for another.
12. **Scripting** – informing diners of the special and selling the special.
13. **Starter** – The same as an appetizer.
14. **Straight up** – when a diner orders something exactly the way it is on the menu.
15. **Turnover Rate** - How fast tables empty and fill during a shift. A high turnover rate means more people have eaten and gone, while a slow turnover rate means the same people have been at the tables for a long time, or the table is sitting empty.
16. **Walk-in** — A large, room-sized refrigerator or freezer with shelves and floor space for storage. You have to walk inside to get what you need, as opposed to a reach-in that you open the door and grab something.
17. **Walkout** – A diner that left without paying.
18. **Waxing a table** – Refers to VIP treatment of a table.
19. **Working** – food that is being prepared.