

## Dining

Often modelers overlook the action that priority (first class / passenger) trains can impart. "Diner.scarm" suggests a manner that Dining Car support can be incorporated into a layout, while still using only traditional toy-train accessories.

As the distance passenger trains would travel increased, there came a need to feed and water passengers. Where a train would normally make a long stop, such as at a locomotive water tank, lunch counters that could quickly feed passengers were built. A famous example is the Harvey House chain of lunch counters on the Santa Fe railroad.

Later, long distance passenger trains began to carry Dining Cars, which were restaurants on wheels. Because meals are usually not served continuously during the entire train trip (supplemental lounge and snack cars fill the gap), these dining cars were often swapped between trains, so that fewer physical dining cars were required to be owned.

Like any restaurant, dining cars require support. Fresh food and drink continuously needs restocking. Table linens need washing. Damaged or missing dinner ware needs replacing. Additionally LP gas for the diners stove and refrigerator also needs refilling.

### Model Scenario

This model provides a commissary to support dining cars, as well as a nearby Lunch Counter for use by trains not carrying a dining car. We are assuming that the location was chosen because it was already a necessary stop for locomotives to take on water.

A stub track, capable of holding at least one 85 foot dining car, will branch from the main line. Although typically only one diner will be held here at a time, occasionally other types of rolling stock, such as a boxcar, reefer, or Liquid Propane Gas tanker, will use the spur for resupplying the commissary.

Alongside the spur will be located the commissary. The MTH Train Depot, such as "Manchester" #30-90400 or "Hooterville" #30-90501, are ideal for the purpose, although you could substitute a Plasticville Suburban Station. Using the MTH train depot as our example, the small doored room on the front right contains the toilet. The door beside this room leads to the laundry. The next door leads to the office and caged supplies (such as alcohol and dinnerware stocks). The high door on the front left, with its truck dock complement on the building rear, leads to where perishables are stored.

On the opposite side of the spur, within the "V" formed by the spur and the main line, is a LP gas tank for refueling diners, as well as supplying the stoves in the lunch counter building. A "helium tank" from a Lionel Operating Helium Dump Car is adequate, although you can substitute any other horizontal LP gas tank you might have available.

Beside the LP gas tank, where the "V" formed by the spur and main line is wider, is an optional antique locomotive watering tank. This tank was the reason the dining car spur was built here. If you still operate steam locomotives, this structure will still be in use. The Lionel Water Tank #138 is a suitable choice, although you could substitute a non-operating Plasticville Water Tank. If you only operate diesel locomotives, you do not have to include this legacy structure on the model (assume that it was demolished).

Next to the commissary is a Lunch Counter where passengers can detrain and grab a quick bite to eat. Of course locals can eat here as well. The Lionel All Night Diner, such as "Irenes" #24176 or "Coca-Cola" #37929, are ideal for the purpose, although you could substitute a Plasticville Diner. The front door is situated so that its facing is towards the main line, at an angle of 90 degrees to the dining car spur (the other building doors are just emergency exits). A walkway in front of the building is paved all the way to the detraining area on the main line, so passengers do not have to walk through dirt. Passengers detrain along the main line track prior to the turnout split. This area is also paved, so it could be used as a regular (unsheltered "park-n-ride" type) station stop.

Optionally, a lamp of some sort can be placed at the corner of the lunch counter building beside the turnout. This lamp would serve both to illuminate the paved area, and to act as a physical barrier to discourage persons from trying to walk across the spur. An omnidirectional lamp, such as the Lionel Lamp #71, is preferred, although a directional lamp could be substituted if it faced the paved detraining area and walkway.

Operationally, you do not have to use this model the same way for opposite direction trains. You could use the road locomotive to drop or take a dining car on trains heading left, without allowing any passenger detraining during the long stop; while on trains heading right, you could have the locomotive move forward to take on water, while allowing passengers to detrain and eat at the lunch counter during the long stop. Whenever you use the paved area as a station stop though, train pauses can be short, even if a Lounge or Snack Car also needs resupplying from the commissary. Any needed items can be staged on the pavement in containers, for a quick transfer onto the train.