

The essential checklist to opening a restaurant



First

- Establish a restaurant concept
- Determine your restaurant's name

5 -6 months out

- Finalize a budget
- Find a building to rent or buy that fits in your budget for your restaurant location
- Curate and design a menu
- Find local distributors and food vendors
- Order equipment
 - Kitchen—Ovens, freezers, slicers, etc.
 - Dining Room—Tables, chairs, dishes, etc.
 - Safety equipment—Wet floor signs, fire extinguishers, floor padding, etc.
 - Office equipment—Pens, computer, paper, etc.
- Once you have a business address:
 - Apply for a business license with your city or county
 - Acquire signage permits with your local municipality
- Install outdoor signage and window lettering on location

3-4 months out

- File for health permits
- Arrange an appointment with the state health inspector
- Determine job descriptions for each position in your restaurant
- Post employment opportunities

2 months out

- Outline staffing needs to determine the volume of staff necessary for each shift
- Create training procedures for employees on cleaning, safety, cash handling, and hospitality inspector

6-8 weeks out

- Determine food production needs—decide what you can do in batches, what can be prepared the night before, and what needs to be prepared fresh upon order
- Establish temperature charts for all refrigerators, freezers, and in-production food items
- Communicate an open date and special orders to your food suppliers
- Establish delivery standards with all vendors
- Review **price** and portion guides for menu
- Establish a safety program and emergency medical procedures for your staff
- Set an opening date and hours of operation
- Create a website—consider online reservations and ordering
- Create Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok accounts to promote your restaurant
- Create a marketing plan to promote the grand opening
- Establish a Yelp account and a Google Business Profile and populate the pages with as much information as possible
- Make sure the smoke alarms and security systems are working properly

4-6 weeks out

- Finish hiring employees
- Set employee schedules
- Order uniforms for front- and back-of-the-house staff
- Get sanitation certification for required staff
- Order cleaning and sanitizing equipment, including hand sanitizer
- Establish trash/recycling removal and recycling procedures
- Find floor padding and rug cleaners
- Find a uniform cleaner
- Find a cable/internet provider

3 weeks out

- Start training employees
- Formulate all recipes and print out station cards
- Set up inventory spaces, both cold and dry
- Program your point-of-sale (POS) system and train cashiers
- Invite your local chamber of commerce and neighborhood associations to the soft opening
- Organize the dish room, slop sink, and pot sink area

2 weeks out

- Order all food and disposables
- Assemble back-of-the-house station books, including diagrams, recipes, photographs, toppings list, and portioning guides

2 weeks out (CONTINUED)


- Assemble front-of-the-house directions with station diagrams, reservation system instructions, and bussing station books
- Purchase a toolbox
- Purchase a first aid kit
- Order printer paper for your POS system and test the ticketing system
- Organize food and other supplies

1 week out

- Inspect all products received
- Test station equipment
- Confirm all smallware is in place
- Set up a brand station that includes menus, packaging, and other to-go items
- Finalize the menu and print

5 days out

Soft opening—invite family, friends, and influencers to an unofficial launch of your new restaurant, so you can test out your menu items and service on customers, incorporate their feedback, and implement improvements before officially opening your doors to the public. Also, be sure to encourage your customers to post their positive dining experience on social media and tag your restaurant for increased brand awareness.



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