SHOWHOW · CHECKLIST

Coffee Shop Opening Checklist

The opening barista has about 45 minutes to get the machine hot, the grinder dialed in, the pastry case full and the register ready, often alone. This checklist puts those jobs in the order that saves time: start whatever needs to warm up first, then work while it heats. It's written for small independent coffee shops and works whether you open at 6 or at 8.

What you'll need

- Keys and alarm code
- Starting cash for the register
- Milk and pastry delivery
- Scale and timer for dialing in

Steps

- [ ] **Turn off the alarm and lock the door behind you.**
  Keep it locked until opening time so you can work without interruptions.

- [ ] **Switch on the espresso machine first.**
  Most commercial machines need 20 to 30 minutes to heat up. Lock the portafilters into the group heads so they heat too.

- [ ] **Switch on the grinder, hot water tower and batch brewer.**
  Check that the bean hopper is at least half full.

- [ ] **Put away the milk delivery and check the fridges.**
  New milk goes to the back, the oldest to the front. Check dates and follow your local food safety rules.

  Watch out: Never leave the milk delivery outside or on the counter. Get it cold right away.

- [ ] **Fill the pastry case.**
  Label anything that needs a label. Put older items at the front if they're still good to sell.

- [ ] **Count the starting cash into the register.**
  Check that the card terminal is on and connected, and put in a new receipt roll if it's low.

- [ ] **Flush each group head for 5 seconds once the machine is hot.**
  This clears any detergent left from last night's clean.

- [ ] **Dial in the espresso and taste it.**
  Pull a shot, weigh and time it against the house recipe, adjust the grind and repeat until it's right. It usually takes 2 to 4 shots.

  Watch out: Never skip dialing in. Overnight changes in humidity shift the grind.

- [ ] **Brew the first batch of drip coffee, if you serve it.**
  Write the brew time on the label of the carafe or airpot.

- [ ] **Stock the bar: cups, lids, sleeves, napkins and milk pitchers.**
  Enough for the first rush, so you're not running to the back at 8:15.

- [ ] **Wipe the tables and set out the chairs.**
  Check the restroom for toilet paper, soap and paper towels, and give it a quick clean if the closers missed it.

- [ ] **Unlock the door at opening time.**
  Turn the music on before the first customer walks in.

How to adapt it

- Write your house recipe into the dial-in step so the opener isn't guessing.
- If two people open, give the machine and bar to one, and the register and floor to the other.
- Put a QR code inside the back door so the opener can follow the list as they go.
- Add your suppliers' delivery times so the opener knows what to expect.