SHOWHOW · CHECKLIST

Restaurant Opening and Closing Checklist

A restaurant shift goes well or badly in the first and last half hour. A missed fridge check, a dining room that isn't set or a gas valve left on can cost a night's profit. This checklist is for the manager or shift lead opening and closing a small restaurant, covering the kitchen, the dining room and the bar. Split it between kitchen and front of house if different people own each part.

What you'll need

- Keys and alarm code
- Today's reservation list
- Prep list
- Starting cash and a cash count sheet

Steps

- [ ] **Opening: Turn off the alarm and walk the whole building.**
  Kitchen, dining room, restrooms, storage and the back door. Look for leaks, pests or anything left on.

- [ ] **Opening: Check the fridge and freezer readings and write them in the log.**
  Follow your local food safety rules. Report any unit that's warmer than usual before anyone uses what's inside.

  Watch out: If a fridge failed overnight, set the food aside until a manager decides what to do.

- [ ] **Opening: Check the deliveries against the order.**
  Count, check dates and condition, and put cold items away first.

- [ ] **Opening: Hand the prep list to the kitchen and confirm who does what.**
  Prep for the specials and the reservation numbers comes first.

- [ ] **Opening: Switch on kitchen equipment in order of warm-up time.**
  Ovens and fryers first, then grills, then hot holding.

- [ ] **Opening: Set the dining room.**
  Tables wiped and level, chairs straight. Check silverware, glasses and menus for spots and smudges.

- [ ] **Opening: Check that the restrooms are clean and stocked.**
  Guests judge the kitchen by the restrooms.

- [ ] **Opening: Count the starting cash into the register.**
  Check that the card terminals are on and connected.

- [ ] **Opening: Print the reservation list and note anything special.**
  Large parties, allergies and special occasions.

- [ ] **Opening: Hold a 5-minute pre-shift meeting.**
  Specials, dishes that have run out (86'd), large parties, allergies and who's working which section.

- [ ] **Closing: Break down the kitchen station by station.**
  Label and store food, switch off equipment, then clean surfaces and floors. Follow your local food safety rules on storing leftovers.

- [ ] **Closing: Shut off the gas at the main valve, if your kitchen does at night.**
  Turn every burner knob off first, then close the valve.

  Watch out: Before the gas goes back on, check every knob is off, or gas leaks from an open burner.

- [ ] **Closing: Reset the dining room for the next service.**
  Tables wiped, chairs up, floors swept and mopped.

- [ ] **Closing: Count the register and record tips the way your restaurant does.**
  Two people count if you can. Put the day's cash in the safe.

- [ ] **Closing: Take out the trash and recycling.**
  Close the dumpster lid and lock any outside gate.

- [ ] **Closing: Check every door and window, then set the alarm and lock up.**
  Back door first, front door last. Push on each door after locking it.

How to adapt it

- Make separate kitchen and front-of-house versions if your team is split.
- Name your own equipment, in the order you switch it on, in the warm-up and break-down steps.
- Keep the fridge log next to the fridges, or as a QR code on the door.
- Add who to call for each kind of emergency at the top.