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The Restaurant Website Checklist, turn a hungry search into an order

This is the checklist we use when we take on a UK restaurant or takeaway. It is built around one hard truth: a food website has one job, turn a hungry search into an order, and almost everything that stops that from happening is fixable. The two biggest leaks are usually the same: an order that goes through a marketplace, which takes a commission on every order and owns your customer, and a menu trapped in a PDF that nobody can read on a phone. Fix those two and a plain, fast website does the rest.

A GUIDE FOR UK OPERATORS

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Audience
UK restaurants, takeaways, cafés and food businesses.

The checklist is opinionated. Where we say "do this", we mean we would not let a food business go live without it. We name no ordering or booking system and quote none of their rates: which one fits depends on your covers and your delivery mix, and what each charges is its own to state.

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01 The checklist at a glance

#	ITEM	LIVES UNDER
1	Google Business Profile claimed and verified	Google Business Profile
2	Primary category set to your cuisine or "Restaurant"	Google Business Profile
3	Opening hours exact, with holiday hours set	Google Business Profile
4	Menu link connected on the profile	Google Business Profile
5	Real photos of the food, room and team	Google Business Profile
6	Order and reserve links wired to the profile	Google Business Profile
7	The menu is real text, not a PDF or photo	Menu
8	Prices shown against every dish	Menu
9	Dietary and allergen flags on each dish	Menu
10	Menu sections that a thumb can navigate	Menu
11	Online ordering on your own site and brand	Ordering
12	Delivery area or postcodes stated plainly	Ordering
13	The marketplace cut understood before you sign	Ordering

#	ITEM	LIVES UNDER
14	Table booking wired to your own diary	Ordering
15	Site is mobile-first and fast on 4G	Website
16	Click-to-call phone number on every page	Website
17	Opening hours visible without scrolling	Website
18	Name, address, phone consistent and crawlable	Website
19	Real food photos, not stock	Website
20	Map and directions embedded on the page	Website
21	NAP matches across every directory	Local SEO
22	LocalBusiness and Menu structured data on the site	Local SEO

02 Google Business Profile, your biggest lever

If you do one thing from this guide, do this. For a restaurant or takeaway, the Google Business Profile (the free Maps and Search listing) tends to send more hungry customers than the website itself. Most people deciding where to eat tonight decide from the listing, the photos, the stars, the hours, the menu, before they ever click through to a site.

2.1 Claim and verify the profile

Search your business name on Google. If a listing exists that you do not control, claim it at **business.google.com**. If none exists, create one. Then verify it, by video, postcard, or phone, depending on what Google offers you. Verifying is what puts the profile in your hands. Google says that once verified you gain ownership of your Business Profile and can make sure your business information is accurate. Anyone can suggest an edit to a profile, and Google says it tells the owner about certain suggested edits before they are published, with four days to accept or reject each one; with no answer, it may publish an edit that other public information, such as your website, supports (Google Business Profile Help, checked 29 November 2026).

2.2 Set the right categories

Set your **primary category to your cuisine** where Google offers it ("Pizza restaurant", "Indian takeaway", "Coffee shop") rather than the generic "Restaurant". This single field tells Google what you are: Google says relevance, how well a profile matches what someone is searching for, is one of the three things local results are mainly based on, and that businesses with complete and accurate information are more likely to show up in local search results. Add secondary categories only where they are genuinely true. Do not stuff categories for food you do not serve.

2.3 Opening hours, exact, with holidays

Wrong hours are the fastest way to lose a customer and earn a one-star "turned up and they were shut". Set your regular hours precisely, and set **special hours for bank holidays and Christmas** ahead of time. Google surfaces holiday hours prominently, and a profile that gets them right looks open and reliable when a hungry person is deciding in seconds.

2.4 Connect the menu link

Add your menu to the profile and link it to the menu page on your own site, not a PDF and not a marketplace. Customers filter on what you serve and what it costs before they decide, and a listing that answers "what have they got and how much" tends to convert far better than one that makes people ring to ask.

2.5 Photos

Add real photos: the shopfront so people recognise it from the street, the room, the team, and your actual dishes. Food photos do a lot of the selling here, a well-lit plate of your signature dish earns more orders than any amount of copy. Refresh them now and then so the profile feels busy and current.

2.6 Order and reserve links

Turn on the "Order online" and "Reserve a table" links and point them at your own site, so a customer can go from the listing straight into your ordering or booking. The fewer taps between "found you" and "ordered", the more orders you keep, and the more of them come through a route where you own the customer.

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03 The menu, get it off the PDF

The menu is the single most important page on a food website, and it is the one most places get wrong. A menu that is a PDF, or worse a photograph of a laminated card, is unreadable on a phone and invisible to Google. This is where the easy wins are.

3.1 Real text, not a PDF or a photo

Build the menu as **real text and sections on the page**, not a downloadable PDF and not an image. A PDF makes people pinch, zoom and drag on a phone, and most give up. Google cannot read the prices inside it, so you do not show up when someone searches for your dish, and a screen reader cannot read it at all. Real text loads instantly, reads on a thumb, and helps you get found.

3.2 Prices against every dish

Show a price against every dish. Customers filter on price before they decide, and a menu that answers "how much" upfront saves them phoning to ask. Real text also means you can change a price in seconds the day your costs move, instead of re-exporting a PDF.

3.3 Dietary and allergen flags

Flag vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free and the major allergens clearly on each dish. It is what a growing share of customers filter on first, and getting it right is both good service and, for allergens, a legal expectation you do not want to get wrong. Plain flags on the dish beat a wall of small print at the bottom.

3.4 Sections a thumb can navigate

Break the menu into sections (starters, mains, sides, drinks) with a sticky jump so a thumb can get to "mains" without a long scroll. A hungry person on a phone should reach what they want in a tap or two. A single endless list is where orders are lost.

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04 Online ordering and who keeps the margin

A food business that only takes orders by phone loses the customer deciding at nine at night with a full mouth of "what shall we get". Online ordering catches that demand. The bigger question is who keeps the margin, and that is where the marketplace decision lives.

4.1 Understand the marketplace cut

A delivery marketplace sends you orders and charges for doing it. Before you sign, ask it what it charges on each order and what else it charges, who holds the customer's details, and what happens if you leave. Know the number before you sign, from the marketplace's own pages.

4.2 Order on your own site and brand

The alternative is ordering on **your own site and brand**, where the order, the payment and the customer stay with you. The ordering system is yours, billed by its supplier, and we take no share of an order. Many places run both on purpose: a marketplace for discovery, and their own site for the repeat customers. That is your call.

4.3 Delivery area, stated plainly

State the postcodes or the radius you deliver to, in plain words, on the page. "We deliver within three miles" or a short list of postcodes stops the "do you deliver here?" call mid-service and stops an order being started that you cannot fulfil. Clear boundaries mean fewer refunds and fewer disappointed customers.

4.4 Table booking wired to your diary

For sit-down and cafés, put a "Book a table" button on every page wired to **your own diary**, so the booking appears where your team actually looks. That avoids phone tag during service and a third-party booking fee on top. Takeaways lead with ordering, cafés often want both, you decide the balance.

4.5 What to ask an ordering or booking system

ASK	WHY IT MATTERS
What it charges on each order or cover, and what else it charges	Commission, fees and a subscription are different costs
Who holds the customer's details	So you know whether you can contact your own regulars
How each order or booking reaches you	So nothing is missed mid-service
What happens to your listing and your data if you leave	So you are not tied in by what you would lose

We name no ordering or table-booking system here and quote none of their rates: what each charges is its own to state, and it varies by plan. Check each answer on the supplier's own pages before you commit, and compare it against keeping the order on your own site.

5.1 Mobile-first and fast on 4G

Assume a phone on a patchy connection, not a desktop on fibre. Compress the food photos, keep the scripts light, and test it on an actual phone away from your wifi. A slow site loses a hungry person before the first dish photo has even loaded.

5.2 Click-to-call on every page

The phone number is a `tel:` link so one tap dials it. Put it in the header on every page. Plenty of customers still ring to order or to check something, do not make them copy a number out.

5.3 Opening hours without scrolling

Show today's opening hours near the top, without a scroll. "Open until 11pm" answers the first question a hungry visitor has, and a place that makes people hunt for its hours loses the order to one that does not.

5.4 NAP consistent and crawlable

Your **Name, Address, and Phone** must appear as real text on the site, commonly in the footer, spelled and formatted identically to your Google profile. Not baked into an image, Google has to be able to read it. Inconsistent NAP between your site and your listings confuses Google and can hold your ranking back.

5.5 Real food photos, not stock

Use your own dishes, your own room, your own team. Stock photos of a generic burger read as fake to anyone who has seen them on ten other sites, and they set an expectation your kitchen did not make. Real food photos are the cheapest trust you can buy, and they sell the order.

5.6 Embedded map and directions

Embed a map so people can see exactly where you are and tap for directions, and make the path from "this looks good" to "ordered" or "booked" one screen, not three. For a takeaway the "order" button is the map; for a restaurant, directions and a booking button both earn their place.

5.7 Simple navigation

A food website needs maybe five things: home, menu, order, book, contact. Resist the urge to add more. Every extra menu item is one more decision between a hungry visitor and an order.

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06 Local SEO basics

Local SEO is mostly about being consistent and being clearly local. You are not competing with the whole internet, you are competing with the other places to eat in your town. A few fundamentals do most of the work.

6.1 NAP consistency across directories

Your Name, Address, and Phone should match, exactly, across your website, your Google profile, and every directory you appear in (Yell, Apple Maps, Bing Places, Facebook, TripAdvisor, and any food directories). Old addresses and abbreviations that differ from listing to listing send mixed signals to Google. Pick one canonical format and make everything agree with it.

6.2 A page per location

If you run more than one site, give each its own page with its own address, hours, map, menu and phone number, and its own Google Business Profile. One blended "our restaurants" page makes it hard for Google to rank either location for its own town.

6.3 Local keywords used naturally

Use the words people actually search, "pizza in Leeds", "curry near me Croydon", in your page titles, headings and copy, but write for a human. Naming your town and your cuisine plainly is enough. Repeating "best pizza Leeds pizza Leeds" over and over is keyword-stuffing, and it reads as spam to people and to Google.

6.4 Structured data for menu and local business

Add **LocalBusiness and Menu structured data** (schema.org markup) to the site. It is a small block of machine-readable code that hands Google your name, address, phone, hours, price range and even your menu items in a format it can trust. It does not guarantee a ranking, but it helps Google understand the business and can support richer search results, including menu details shown directly in search.

07 What we do NOT do, the anti-checklist

A few opinionated negatives. These are positions we take when building the food business's presence.

- **We do not put the menu in a PDF.** It is unreadable on a phone, invisible to Google, useless to a screen reader, and a pain to update. The menu goes on the page as real text, every time.
- **We do not hand every order to a marketplace by default.** A marketplace can have its place for discovery, but what it charges and who holds your customers' details are questions to ask before you sign, not after. Ordering on your own site keeps the repeat trade under your name.
- **We do not use stock food photos.** A generic plate of food read as fake sets an expectation your kitchen did not make. Real photos of your own dishes, or none, but never someone else's stock burger.
- **We do not keyword-stuff the business name.** Your Google profile name should be your real name, not "Tony's | Best Pizza Leeds | Pasta Curry Kebab". Fake name embellishment is against Google's guidelines and gets reported by competitors.
- **We do not use auto-playing audio or video.** It eats mobile data, it surprises someone browsing on the sofa, and it slows the page. If video earns its place, it loads muted and on a tap.

08 Sources and further reading

- Google Business Profile Help, set-up, verification, categories, hours, menu, order links · `support.google.com/business`
- Google Business Profile Help, Verify your business on Google, checked 29 November 2026 · `support.google.com/business/answer/7107242`
- Google Business Profile Help, Understand Google updates on your Business Profile, checked 29 November 2026 · `support.google.com/business/answer/3480441`
- Google Business Profile Help, How to improve your local ranking on Google, checked 29 November 2026 · `support.google.com/business/answer/7091`
- Google Search Central, Local Business structured data · `developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/local-business`
- Google Search Central, Menu structured data · `developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/menu`
- schema.org, LocalBusiness and Menu type references · `schema.org/Restaurant`
- Food Standards Agency, allergen guidance for food businesses · `food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses`

If you would rather we did it

Everything in this checklist is yours to use as it stands. If you would rather we built and ran the site and the ordering for your restaurant or takeaway, tell us what you need at `veryseoly.com/contact` and we will send you a written quote.