

How to How to Open a New Restaurant

By [Lorri Mealey](#), About.com

Opening a new restaurant takes careful planning.

JC Lomek

Many people dream of opening their own restaurant. Here is a step by step guide to get you started.

Difficulty: Hard

Time Required: Anywhere between a couple of months to a year or more, depending on location, concept, and size.

Here's How:

1. Decide on a Restaurant Concept

The first step in opening a new restaurant is deciding what type of restaurant it is going to be. Are you looking at opening a high-end fine dining restaurant? A casual diner? Do you have a specific type of cuisine you plan to serve, such as Italian, French or Indian? Perhaps you want to specialize in one area, like a microbrewery and pub. Before you move onto step two you first need to define what kind of restaurant you want to open.

2. Select a Restaurant Location

Location, location, location. It can make or break a restaurant. Before you run and sign a lease for your restaurant location, do your homework. Is the restaurant location in a busy area, with plenty of foot traffic? If not, is there enough parking? Have ten other restaurants come and gone in the same spot? (warning bells should be loud and clear, if that is the case.)

3. Choose a Restaurant Name

Probably the most fun step in opening a new restaurant. Select a restaurant name that means something. It can be a reflection of your theme or location. i.e. An Italian restaurant called Giovanni's or it can be called after the owner, such as Paula Deen's Savannah Restaurant, The Lady & Son's.

4. Write a Restaurant Business Plan

There are two important reasons you need a restaurant business plan. 1. It helps you see big fat problems in your restaurant plan, like not a big enough population base or a bad location. And 2. No bank in their right mind will finance you without one.

5. Find Financing

This is the step that stops most people from actually opening their own restaurant. Financing. Although it is increasingly harder to get financing for a restaurant, it is not impossible. Between banks, small business agencies and private investors, financing is possible. But you need to show up to your interview prepared and professional, showing potential investors that you know what you are doing.

6. Apply for Licenses and Permits

Many licenses and permits take several weeks, even months to be approved. So as soon as you know you are good to go with your financing, you should start filling the paperwork. Common licenses and permits for restaurants, regardless of state include liquor licenses, sign permits and workers compensation.

7. Design the Restaurant

A large empty space quickly fills up when you start adding commercial kitchens, walk-in refrigerators, a bar, rest rooms and waiting area. The design of a restaurant should be a balance between aesthetics and seating capacity, always keeping practicality in mind.

8. Write a Restaurant Menu

A well-written restaurant menu should be both descriptive easy to read and have a clear, uncluttered layout. A few things to avoid on a restaurant menu include clip art and too many disclaimers.

9. Stock you Restaurant

Once you have your restaurant design down, you can start purchasing commercial kitchen equipment and furniture for your dining room and other areas in the front of the house. To save money, consider buying used equipment, as well as leasing certain items. Commercial equipment with the Energy Star logo can cost more at first, but usually pay for themselves in as little as one year.

10. Hire Restaurant Staff

As you get closer to opening day you need to begin hiring for both the kitchen and floor. Kitchen staff, wait staff and bartenders are all integral parts of any restaurant, and you want to hire the perfect person for each position.

11. Get the Word Out About Your New Restaurant

Advertising is a must for most new restaurants. Supplement traditional advertising, such as newspapers and radio ads, with new media. Don't overlook the power of a good website for your restaurant. Use social media sites, like Twitter, MySpace and FaceBook, to spread the word about your new place.

What You Need:

- Patience
- Perseverance
- High Threshold for Stress
- A Sense of Humor