

Pair with purpose

Food & beverage pairing | taste, compare, explain



Start with the finished dish, not just its protein. Sauce, cooking method, sweetness and intensity can change the best match.

A SIMPLE TASTING SEQUENCE

- 1. Describe the dish.** Note richness, acidity, salt, sweetness, heat, texture and its strongest aroma.
- 2. Choose a strategy.** Echo a shared flavor, contrast a texture, or balance intensity. Treat the choice as a hypothesis.
- 3. Compare one bite and one sip.** Taste each alone, then together. Notice what becomes harsher, flatter or more pleasant.
- 4. Ask the guest.** Preference, alcohol choice and dietary needs come before the pairing theory.

USEFUL STARTING POINTS

- Rich dishes:** test a bright, refreshing drink alongside the sauce.
- Sweet dishes:** a dry wine may seem sharper after a sweet bite; compare a sweeter option.
- Chilli heat:** test cautiously; higher alcohol may accentuate a hot sensation.
- Delicate dishes:** begin with a lighter drink so neither element overwhelms the other.

Dish profile	Try comparing	What to notice
Roasted carrots & herbs	Citrus-herb sparkling water	Does brightness balance sweetness?
Tomato-rich pasta	Bright red wine or tart tea	Does the sauce flatten the drink?
Chocolate dessert	Sweet wine or milky cocoa	Does the drink taste bitter afterward?

Examples are tasting ideas, not universal rules. Check every ingredient and garnish for allergens. Alcohol options are for legal-age guests only; offer an alcohol-free choice.

Allergens: pause & check

U.S. kitchen awareness | communication before service



Never guess from a dish name. Confirm the current recipe, product labels and preparation process with the person in charge.

KNOW THE U.S. NINE MAJOR ALLERGENS

Milk, eggs, fish, Crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soybeans and sesame. Other foods can also cause allergies. Ask about the specific food, including the fish, shellfish or nut involved.

USE A CLEAR HANDOFF

Listen: record the guest's exact concern and alert the manager or designated lead.

Check: use current ingredient labels, supplier details, recipe components and substitutions. Include sauces, stocks, oils and garnishes.

Control: follow the site's allergen procedures for handwashing, clean equipment, work areas and protected ingredients. Shared fryers and tools need review.

Confirm: communicate the agreed preparation and identified limitations through service. If uncertain, stop and tell the guest.

Do not assume	Why it needs a check
No warning label = no risk	Absence of advisory wording is not proof of no cross-contact.
Remove the topping = safe	Allergen residue can remain; follow the approved remake process.
Heat will fix it	Cooking is not a reliable way to eliminate allergen risk.

General U.S. awareness only, not certification or a guarantee of safety. Follow local rules and your approved procedures. For a suspected severe reaction, activate the emergency plan and call 911; do not diagnose or delay.

Know the cost of a plate

Recipe costing | units, yield and contribution



Price the amount actually used. Keep purchased quantity, usable quantity and portion size on the same basis.

BUILD A TRACEABLE RECIPE COST

- 1. Record the pack.** Use the supplier, exact item, pack size, dated invoice cost and unit. Apply credits consistently; avoid a made-up market price.
- 2. Match the recipe basis.** A raw recipe quantity uses raw-unit cost. A trimmed or cooked quantity needs the corresponding usable-unit cost.
- 3. Add every component.** Include sauces, garnish and sub-recipes once. Keep takeaway packaging separate if you want a food-only measure.
- 4. Divide by actual usable portions.** Keep full precision in calculations, then round the displayed money.

Cost per usable unit = purchase cost / usable quantity
 Recipe cost = sum of (ingredient quantity x matching unit cost)
 Portion food cost = recipe cost / usable portions
 Food-cost % = portion food cost / net selling price x 100

Illustrative 12-portion batch	Basis	Cost
Main ingredient	6 lb usable x \$4.00/lb	\$24.00
Vegetables	3 lb x \$2.00/lb	\$6.00
Sauce + garnish	One batch; already costed	\$6.00
Total / 12 portions	\$36.00 / 12	\$3.00

At a \$12 net selling price: food cost is 25%; food-only contribution is \$9. That \$9 is not net profit: labor, rent, fees and other expenses still have to be paid. There is no universal ideal food-cost percentage.

One ingredient. Many plates.

Price-change impact | re-cost before you react



A case-price change is not automatically the same percentage change in the finished plate. First check pack size, usable yield and every recipe that uses it.

TRACE THE CHANGE THROUGH THE KITCHEN

- Normalize:** compare old and new cost per identical unit. A cheaper case may contain less product.
- Check yield:** quality, trim or cooking losses can change usable cost even if the invoice price is unchanged.
- Follow recipe links:** include sauces and prepared batches, but do not charge both the raw ingredients and the same sub-recipe.
- Review the response:** test purchasing alternatives, portion accuracy or menu pricing. Do not silently change quality, allergens or portion promises.

Plate cost change = quantity used per plate x change in matching unit cost
Projected period impact = plate cost change x planned portions

Illustrative example	Old	New
Same 10 lb case; 100% usable	\$40.00	\$46.00
Cost per lb	\$4.00	\$4.60
6 oz portion = 0.375 lb	\$1.50	\$1.725
Whole plate incl. \$2.50 other food	\$4.00	\$4.225

The ingredient rose 15%, but this whole plate rose 5.625%. At 400 planned plates, the added cost is \$90.00. Use the unrounded \$0.225 change, not rounded \$0.23, in the projection. This is an example, not a forecast.

Scale the batch, not the clock

Recipe scaling & yield | consistent portions at any size



Change ingredient quantities with a conversion factor. Then validate equipment, batch depth, process and finished yield separately.

TWO FACTORS, TWO DIFFERENT JOBS

Scaling factor: desired finished yield / original finished yield. Multiply each ingredient amount by that factor.

Usable yield fraction: usable quantity / purchased quantity. Divide usable quantity needed by that fraction to plan purchases.

Both portion size and count changing? Compare total finished weight or volume, not portion counts alone.

Test the process: seasoning, thickening, mixing, leavening, pan loading and evaporation may need a trial. Cooking, cooling and holding times do not scale by simple multiplication.

Purchase quantity = usable quantity needed / usable yield fraction
Example: 3.6 kg usable / 0.80 = 4.5 kg to purchase

Illustrative conversion	Calculation	Result
24 portions at 150 g	24 x 150 g	3,600 g finished
60 portions at 120 g	60 x 120 g	7,200 g finished
Scaling factor	7,200 / 3,600	2.0
Original 900 g ingredient	900 g x 2.0	1,800 g

The 80% yield above is an illustrative measured yield, not a standard for an ingredient. Do not apply it again if the recipe quantity already includes that loss. Use validated site procedures for food safety; this sheet supplies no cook or cooling limits.

Read your menu in four ways

Menu performance | popularity x food-only contribution



Use four categories to choose an action, not to label a dish good or bad. This is a generic management tool, not a quality, safety or nutrition rating.

SET A FAIR COMPARISON FIRST

Compare like with like: use one menu group and the same sales period. Record actual net price, unit sales and current portion food cost.

Define your cutoffs: document what counts as high popularity and high contribution before classifying. No universal cutoff fits every business.

Keep context: availability, promotion, dietary needs, labor and waste can explain a result. A short run or stockout can distort popularity.

Food-only contribution per sale = net selling price - portion food cost

Popularity share = item units sold / total units sold in its comparison group

Category	Popularity / contribution	Suggested next action
Signature	High / high	Protect consistency and availability.
Core	High / low	Review portions, purchasing and price.
Elevate	Low / high	Test description, placement or sampling.
Reserve	Low / low	Investigate before revising or removing.

These are four categories, not a best-to-worst ranking. Contribution here excludes labor and overhead; it is not net profit. A high food-cost percentage alone does not decide whether to keep an item.

Count it. Match it. Review it.

Inventory & receiving | keep units and evidence aligned



A matching Vendor Item Number helps identify a product. It does not prove the delivered quantity, pack size, price, condition or allergen information is correct.

AT RECEIVING

- Match the vendor and item together.** Different suppliers may reuse the same number. If a match is missing or duplicated, review manually.
- Compare order, delivery and invoice.** Confirm description, brand, pack, quantity, price and agreed credits. Follow approved condition and temperature checks.
- Resolve before posting.** Record discrepancies, retain source documents and prevent a duplicate invoice or receipt. Do not treat a proposed credit as received.

AT STOCK COUNT

- Set a cutoff and shelf order.** Track movements during counting. Count each location once, then combine location subtotals.
- Count compatible units.** Separate sealed cases from all loose stock. Tare containers. Keep raw and prepared stock on distinct records.

Illustrative count	Calculation	Result
Pack: 6 bags x 5 lb	6 x 5	30 lb / case
2 sealed cases + 7.5 lb loose	(2 x 30) + 7.5	67.5 lb
Case cost \$72	\$72 / 30	\$2.40 / lb
Extended stock value	67.5 x \$2.40	\$162.00

This is a theoretical value, not proof of physical stock or food safety. Ounces by weight and fluid ounces by volume are different. Never count ingredients both inside a prepared batch and again as raw stock.

Measure waste. Protect portions.

Waste & portion control | useful records without double counting



Record what was discarded, why and where. A good waste record points to a specific action without confusing normal yield loss with an avoidable discard.

KEEP THE CATEGORIES DISTINCT

Normal preparation loss: planned peel, trim or cook loss already reflected in measured yield. Do not add it to recipe cost a second time.

Ingredient waste: record the discarded ingredient and its matching unit, such as spoiled produce or a damaged container.

Prepared-food waste: record the batch or portion discarded. Do not also post all its ingredient quantities as a second discard.

Plate returns: record the event and reason separately. A sold portion is already part of theoretical recipe usage; do not consume it twice.

TURN THE RECORD INTO A SMALL TEST

Check portions: tare the plate and compare several portions against the recipe standard using a suitable scale.

Find a repeat reason: overproduction, preparation error or overportioning may call for different actions. Assign one owner and a review date.

Recorded waste cost = discarded quantity x matching recorded unit cost
Extra portion cost = extra quantity per serving x unit cost x servings

Illustrative portion check	Calculation	Result
Standard 4 oz; actual average 4.5 oz	4.5 - 4.0	0.5 oz extra
Ingredient cost \$4.80/lb	\$4.80 / 16	\$0.30 / oz
100 servings	0.5 x \$0.30 x 100	\$15.00 extra

The example shows potential ingredient cost, not guaranteed savings. Do not reuse, donate, freeze or extend the life of questionable food just to improve a waste figure. Follow approved food-safety procedures.

Sources: BCcampus: Food Costs | BCcampus: Yield Testing