

Sample restaurant menu audit

The Fold & Whisk (invented) · 9 dishes · 2 sections · Web version: menumargin.co.uk/sample-report

1. Executive summary

This is a sample audit of an invented all-day restaurant menu with 9 dishes in 2 sections. It is not a real venue, customer or result.

The menu scores 62 out of 100 on what can be seen on it. Real room to improve. Start with a sides and extras section: it is the finding most likely to be worth money.

The first thing to review: there are no sides or add-ons to order. Then: no dish is priced well above the middle of the menu.

Nothing in this report says whether any dish is profitable. That needs the portion cost and sales volume for each dish, which a menu does not contain — section 7 shows exactly what is missing.

2. Menu score and explanation

Score: 62 / 100. Real room to improve. Start with a sides and extras section: it is the finding most likely to be worth money.

Pricing	69	3 findings
Wording	52	2 findings
Structure	100	Nothing flagged here.
Completeness	90	1 finding

The score measures what the menu communicates. It says nothing about profit.

The menu, as read back

Small plates	Soup of the day — With sourdough and salted butter.	£6.50
Small plates	Whipped cod roe — Pickled cucumber, dill oil, warm flatbread.	£7.50
Small plates	Charred hispi cabbage — Brown butter, hazelnut, aged parmesan.	£8.00
Mains	Lamb rump (no description)	£18.50
Mains	Steak frites (no description)	£18.00
Mains	Roast chicken, half (no description)	£17.50
Mains	Mushroom pappardelle (no description)	£16.95
Mains	Beer-battered haddock — Triple-cooked chips, crushed peas, tartare.	£16.50

3. Top three visible findings

OBSERVED · MEDIUM PRIORITY

1. There are no sides or add-ons to order

Lamb rump, Steak frites, Roast chicken, half and 3 more come as they are, with nothing printed to add. Sides and extras are among the few things a guest adds to an order without being asked, when they can see them.

What to review: Add a short sides and extras section beneath the mains — chips, a salad, a sauce, something to add to a burger — each with a price.

OBSERVED · MEDIUM PRIORITY

2. No dish is priced well above the middle of the menu

Your most expensive dish is £18.50 against a middle of £16.50. Without something clearly at the top of the range, guests have less to measure the rest against, and mid-priced dishes can read as the expensive ones.

What to review: Consider whether one or two dishes could genuinely justify a premium price. They do not have to sell in volume, but check their cost and portion before adding them.

OBSERVED · MEDIUM PRIORITY

3. 6 dishes in Mains sit within a narrow price range of £2.55

The dishes in this section are priced at roughly the same level, so the menu gives a guest little signal about which one is the more substantial or premium choice. That may be deliberate — it depends on what each dish costs you and how it sells.

What to review: Check whether the price ladder reflects each dish's ingredient cost, portion size and perceived value before changing any price.

4. Description and wording findings

OBSERVED · HIGH PRIORITY

4. Four of your highest-priced dishes have no description

Lamb rump, Steak frites, Roast chicken, half and 1 more are listed by name and price only. A name alone asks the guest to already know what the dish is. They are among your highest-priced dishes: they ask the guest to make a higher-value decision without explaining the ingredients, preparation or what makes them distinctive.

What to review: Add one clear line to each dish — what is in it, and one thing that makes it worth ordering.

5. Price-architecture observations

These describe how the prices are arranged. None says a price is too high or too low — that depends on cost, portion and demand.

OBSERVED · MEDIUM PRIORITY

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OBSERVED · LOW PRIORITY

5. Prices end in several different ways

Your menu mixes .50, round numbers, .95 endings. On its own each is fine; together they can make the pricing look unconsidered.

What to review: Pick one convention and apply it across the whole menu. Round numbers suit a more premium room; .95 suits volume.

6. Missing information

OBSERVED · MEDIUM PRIORITY

6. 9 dishes carry no allergen information

Nothing on the scanned menu records allergens against these dishes. Allergen information is your responsibility to verify against your own recipes and suppliers — this is a note that the information is absent, not a compliance assessment.

What to review: Record the 14 UK allergens against each dish from your own recipe specs, and keep that record where your team can reach it during service.

NEEDS YOUR DATA

How often each dish actually sells

A sales export from your till for a normal trading period. Without it, no dish can be called popular or unpopular.

NEEDS YOUR DATA

What each dish costs you to make

Recipe specs and current supplier prices. Margin notes here are a band estimated from dish type and price, not a costing.

Which dishes are Stars, Plowhorses, Puzzles or Dogs

Both of the above together. That classification is contribution margin plotted against sales volume, and guessing it from a menu would be inventing both axes.

7. Profitability — requires operator data

A menu audit cannot say which dishes make money. For every dish, portion cost and sales volume are missing, so food cost %, GP % and menu-engineering class cannot be calculated yet.

How adding a cost changes the analysis (hypothetical figures, for illustration only)

If the operator entered a portion cost of £5.40 for lamb rump (£18.50 including 20% VAT): price ex-VAT £15.42; food cost 35%; GP 65%; cash contribution £10.02 per sale. Adding sales volume for every dish would then allow the menu-engineering matrix. This is not a real cost or result.

8. Recommended next actions

1. Add a short sides and extras section beneath the mains — chips, a salad, a sauce, something to add to a burger — each with a price.
2. Consider whether one or two dishes could genuinely justify a premium price. They do not have to sell in volume, but check their cost and portion before adding them.
3. Check whether the price ladder reflects each dish's ingredient cost, portion size and perceived value before changing any price.
4. Add the portion cost for each main, starting with the highest-priced dishes.
5. Export four weeks of sales by dish from the till, so popularity can be measured rather than assumed.
6. Re-run the audit after changing the menu, and compare the two.

9. Disclaimer and methodology

This sample menu was written for illustration. In the product, an uploaded menu is read into dishes, sections, prices and descriptions, and you check and correct that read-back before anything is analysed.

Each finding is produced by fixed rules over the menu as read — counting, comparing prices within a section, and checking what is missing. The same menu always produces the same findings.

Every finding carries one label. Observed: counted directly from the menu. Calculated: worked out from figures you entered. Estimated: inferred from dish type, price and wording. Needs your data: cannot be judged from the menu alone.

The score is built from four area scores — pricing, wording, structure and completeness — each starting at 100 and reduced by the severity of the findings in that area, and by how many dishes each one reaches. The headline leans towards the weakest area (60% the lowest, 40% the average), because one weak area costs a menu more than three good ones earn. It measures what the menu communicates, not how profitable the business is.

No AI-drafted wording is included in this sample, so every sentence in the findings is the rule-based output.

Findings are based on the menu as scanned. They are a starting point for your own judgement, not a substitute for your sales and cost figures.

Any allergen or dietary note describes what was found on the menu. Verifying allergen information against your own recipes and suppliers remains the responsibility of the food business.

MenuMargin provides decision-support tools. The operator remains responsible for commercial, menu, allergen and pricing decisions.