

MARKETING BEST PRACTICES

Get the most out of your restaurant's social media

Connect with diners
and build your brand



Food and dining are some of the most shared and top-performing content on social channels, where mobile is king. Everything should be mobile-first, or designed to be seen on a small screen. Social media is ever-changing as it adapts to consumers' changing behaviors. The checklist you'll find here is based on social marketing trends now, but best practices may shift over time.

Before you dive into the checklist, here's a quick breakdown on—

- **What to post**
- **How to take a great food picture**
- **What UGC is and how to use it**

What to post

Any content you post should be something someone might want to see. Obvious options are pictures of your food and announcements of upcoming specials or events. But your restaurant's social posts don't need to end there. Stories from the floor, shots of an active kitchen, and videos of the chef giving a quick take on that morning's visit to the market or that night's special dish are all good fodder for sharing on social.

How to take a great food picture

Visually compelling content resonates best with people. The competition to stand out with pictures of food is fierce, so make sure you're making the most of your shots. And yes, you can get stellar photos with your phone.

- Use natural light. Take the food to where the light is and shoot it there.
- When natural light isn't available, have someone else hold their phone flashlight up to it and take the photo without flash for a better-than-flash effect.
- Look through the lens or photo view to adjust your angle (30-45 degrees tends to be best)—it will look different than in real life.
- Leave some negative space. Shots that are too close or cluttered don't let the eye see the food properly.
- Get a tripod. Holding steady makes a big difference when focusing on close objects.
- Learn how to edit. Use the basic features on your phone to straighten, bring lighting up or down, and adjust the cast as needed to get a great photo.

What UGC is and how to use it

UGC is user-generated content. It's the posts and pictures about your restaurant that other people put out there on their accounts. Monitor geotags and @ mentions about your business to know when people post about you, then share those posts, being sure to thank the original poster and respond to posts to build loyalty and word-of-mouth marketing. It's a great way to have content to post, and it helps build community and a following in the process.



Checklist for organic social media

- Post crave-worthy pictures!** No picture is better than a bad picture if you want to stand out from the crowd.
- Keep post descriptions on the shorter side.** You want to avoid truncation on mobile. Aim for under 200 characters on Instagram and under 70 characters on Facebook.
- Take advantage of video whenever possible.** Clips under 30 seconds perform best, so consider posting quick, fun takes.
- Tap into the conversation using relevant hashtags.** Hashtags give you the opportunity to people interested in what you're doing to find you. They can help increase your discoverability and build brand affinity. Aim for 5-7 hashtags per post in the comments section.
- Follow others.** Start with your friends and neighbors to engage those in your local community. Chefs you admire, restaurants you like, and other things that connect with you business help create community as well.
- Respond to posts to build loyalty and word-of-mouth marketing.** This creates a sense of community and encourages engagement.
- Geolocate and tag your restaurant.** This can expand your reach and make sure people can find you.
- Leverage user-generated content (UGC).** It's a great way to have content to post, and it helps start conversations with people already interested in what you do.
- Offer more than pictures of food.** Give people a behind-the-scenes look into the kitchen or the restaurant. Connect with local events.
- Go beyond words.** Announce daily specials, holiday closings, or new menu items with photos and quick videos to garner more attention.



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