



## Commercial Kitchen Essentials Start with the Menu

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE FOR RESTAURANTS AND FOODSERVICE OPERATORS

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# Menu-Driven Commercial Kitchen Equipment Checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate your commercial kitchen equipment based on your menu, volume, and workflow. This is not a one-size-fits-all list. Review each section and check items that directly support how your menu operates day to day.

## Menu Review

- Menu items and cooking methods clearly defined
- High-volume vs low-volume items identified
- Shared ingredients across multiple dishes noted
- Prep done daily vs weekly understood

## Cooking Equipment

- Primary cooking methods supported by equipment capacity
- Equipment sized for peak service volume
- Layout supports smooth flow during service
- Room for future menu adjustments

## Refrigeration

- Adequate refrigerated storage for menu ingredients
- Prep refrigeration located near workstations
- Walk-in size aligns with delivery frequency
- Cold storage supports food safety practices

## Prep Areas & Equipment

- Sufficient prep space for daily production
- Equipment supports batch prep where applicable
- Workflow minimizes cross-traffic and congestion
- Prep areas align with menu complexity

## Holding & Finishing

- Hot holding supports service volume
- Equipment protects food quality and temperature
- Cooling equipment supports advance prep

## Dishwashing & Sanitation

- Dish capacity matches service volume
- Sanitation stations placed for efficiency
- Adequate space for drying and storage

## Overall Planning

- Equipment selections align with menu goals
- Layout supports staff efficiency
- Space allows for growth or menu changes
- Equipment investments support long-term operations

This checklist is designed to guide thoughtful planning, not dictate a fixed equipment package. Use it as a working tool as menus evolve, volumes change, or new concepts take shape. When equipment decisions are driven by the menu, kitchens operate more efficiently, support consistent food quality, and remain flexible for future growth.

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