

Checklist – “Keeping the Service Under Control – Before It Turns Into Firefighting”

For Chefs & Kitchen Managers

Purpose:

Create calm, overview, and predictability *before* the rush begins.

When to use:

30 minutes before service

Takes ±10 minutes

Printable / Checkable

Mental & Team Reset

- ☐ Team is complete (or it's clear who is missing)
- ☐ Everyone knows their exact position for this service
- ☐ Tasks are clearly assigned, not “we’ll see”
- ☐ Expected level of busyness is stated (quiet / normal / peak)

A lot of chaos comes from no one having the full overview.

Mise en Place Reality Check

- ☐ Critical components double-checked (sauces, proteins, garnishes)
- ☐ Nothing is “we’ll do that later”
- ☐ Bottlenecks identified (what could slow us down later?)
- ☐ Backup ready in case something fails (Plan B)

No mise en place = guaranteed firefighting.

Communication Agreements

- ☐ Who calls the orders?
- ☐ Who makes decisions when it gets busy?
- ☐ What do we do in case of mistakes or delays?
- ☐ What must be reported immediately, and what can be solved independently?

Stress comes from uncertainty, not from pressure.

Setting Pace & Priorities

- ☐ What matters more today: speed or perfection? À la carte or set menu
- ☐ Which dishes require extra attention?
- ☐ What can be simplified if it gets really busy?

Making choices prevents panic.

Chef's Personal Check

- ☐ Am I in the operation or above it?
- ☐ Am I approachable, or only firefighting?
- ☐ What is my main focus point today?

A chef who only reacts loses control.

Final Reality Question

- ☐ If it gets busy now: where will it most likely go wrong?
→ Have I done something about that?

Thinking ahead is leadership.

After Service

- ☐ What went better than yesterday?
- ☐ Where did tension or unrest begin?
- ☐ What can I adjust before tomorrow's service?

Small improvements = structural calm.