

The new *normal* in foodservice

Our Essential '12 tips' for helping you to successfully re-open your business.

With the UK government providing guidance on best practises for lifting lockdown in the hospitality industry, we wanted to let you know that Essential Cuisine are here to help you plan your "new normal", for both your workplace and your customer base. As we all know, unfortunately this process will not just be a simple case of turning on the lights, instead plans need to be put into place for re-opening and the months ahead.

We've gathered some useful resources to help you make the appropriate changes to your business setting and practises. We hope the below information will help to highlight any potential issues that may need to be considered before you re-open your doors this summer.



1. Hygiene

Establishments are now expected to have a much more rigorous cleaning schedule. At one time, this would have been done 'out of hours', when customers were not present - now, customers will expect to be reassured by seeing these practices take place, frequently. Signage, both internally and externally will be expected to clearly state the rules a customer must abide by, along with sanitising stations and two metre distance markings.

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2. Customer journey

When the hospitality industry re-opens, social distancing is likely to stay in place for the foreseeable future. We understand that this may not be ideal for smaller establishments. You should consider a one way system for staff and customers to get to tables and the toilets, and put additional signage in place including floor markings to instruct customers how to stay a safe distance apart. If you need help in sourcing signage - get in touch!

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3. Table settings

Table offerings will need to be considered to avoid infection. Realistically, anything that more than one customer can touch (apart from the table of course) needs to go! This includes items such as placemats and condiment sets. In replacement, offer single use salt and pepper sachets, ask waiters and waitresses to distribute individual sauce portions and consider disposable (recyclable) table cloths and table wear.

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4. Dining experience

Establishments that offer self-serving bars will be advised to shield such areas with perspex screens and to have a member of the team serving food. Cutlery, glassware and plates should be cleaned at the table side, or alternatively brought to the customer in packaging for added assurance. Businesses are being advised to transport meals from the kitchen to the customer using plate coverings.

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5. Menus

Sharing menus amongst customers imposes a risk of spreading the virus. Some eateries have developed apps that can download to order food. Recyclable, disposable menus, or menus that have an anti-bacterial coating are good options for the less tech savvy! If you would like support in designing your disposable menu or guidance on where to get it printed, just get in touch!

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6. Menu planning

With social distancing impacting the working kitchen operation, reduced covers, and greater challenges around keeping costs down to remain profitable it really important that you look at cutting down the current size of your menu, the number of ingredients you use, and how you can practically pull together a menu. We can help with recipe and menu planning including reducing the complexity of your menu and making it easier to deliver. With our ready to use Signature range of stocks, jus, and our famous Hollandaise Sauce we can speed up preparation times and also address any reduction of numbers or skill set in your kitchen. Our range also includes our top selling Premier Veal Jus, giving you a 5 star jus in minutes through to our versatile stocks and street food seasonings products. We can also help you reduce down the number of ingredients you need to deliver on your dessert menu, our Crème Anglaise is so much more than a premium sauce and can be used as the key ingredient for multiple desserts. Check out our website for a range of recipe inspiration and recipe books cross utilising our ingredients.

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7. Suppliers

The team will also have to consider how they would like suppliers to deliver produce. Many are setting up small reception areas to create contactless drop-off points to avoid large volumes of people unnecessarily walking through buildings. Wiping down deliveries, such as tinned goods and thoroughly washing fresh fruits and vegetables is also advised.

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8. Payment methods

Many organisations are taking a different approach to minimising contact, and are going 'cash free' by only accepting card payments, whether this be online or using a contactless card machine to further minimise the spread of the virus. If a customers bill exceeds the contactless limit, the card machine should be wiped with sanitising wipes after each use.

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9. Toilet facilities

Regular cleaning is more important than ever. Notices should now be provided outside of the toilets, including information about opening and closing doors, a reminder about the best way to wash your hands or the best way to dispose of sanitary products or rubbish. Many organisations are now opting for foot operated bins and doors, and sensors on taps and toilets.

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10. Air conditioning

It is advised that restaurants should switch off the air conditioning for the foreseeable. Scientists have found that air-conditioning circulates droplets in the air, making it far more likely for bacteria and viruses to spread. When indoor restaurants re-open, on hot days, you may choose to open windows instead.

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11. Your employees

Processes such as temperature checks should be in place - any temperature over 38 degrees should receive immediate medical attention. Educating members of the team about the common signs and symptoms of COVID-19 is also vital - employees should fully understand when they should self-isolate. We expect that many establishments will be encouraging members of staff to wear masks or face coverings and in some cases, gloves.

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12. In the kitchen

Hand sanitiser, regular hand washing and avoiding touching your face is vital. Wearing disposable gloves where possible and regular full surface sterilisations are also hugely important. Regarding workflow, re-considering the kitchen layout by creating individual stations to minimise interaction with other members of staff is the way forward. This may require you to make small adjustments to your menu.

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Essential Cuisine are here to support you every step of the way. We have developed a specific COVID-19 support page on our website, offering tips and advice to several industry areas. We also have a range of recipe ideas suited to home delivery, options to make ingredients go further, options to minimise food waste plus lots of great nutritional meal alternatives.

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