

RESTAURANT AUTOMATIONS

The Restaurant Automation Checklist

12 things you can automate this week with free tools.
No developer, no monthly fee, no POS switch.

Every item below is something a small restaurant, cafe or takeaway can set up on its own. Each one lists the free tool and how long it realistically takes. Work top to bottom, tick as you go.

Free guide for viewers of the channel

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START HERE

How to use this checklist

You do not need all twelve. Most restaurants get the biggest jump from the first three, because those are the ones that take work off the phone during service. Set those up first, run them for a week, then come back for the rest.

Three rules that decide whether this works:

- Fix the process before you automate it. An automated version of a bad ordering flow is still a bad ordering flow, it is just faster at annoying people.
- One owner per automation. Write a name next to each item you tick. Anything owned by "the team" gets checked by nobody.
- Test it as a guest. Order from your own form, scan your own QR code, on your own phone, before it goes live.

The three to do first

1. Online order form, so the phone stops ringing during service.
2. Table QR code to your menu, so you stop reprinting and stop explaining.
3. Review request after the visit, so your rating climbs without you asking in person.

Together: about one hour of work, zero cost.

SECTION 1

Take orders and bookings without the phone

- ☐ **Online order form**
Build a simple order form with your dishes, pickup time and phone number. Every order lands in a spreadsheet you can keep open on a tablet in the kitchen. Put the link in your Instagram bio, your Google profile and your WhatsApp away message.
FREE TOOL: Google Forms + Google Sheets | **SETUP:** 15 min
- ☐ **Table and takeaway QR code**
One QR code that opens your menu or order form. Print it, laminate it, put it on every table and on the counter. When the menu changes you change the file, not the sticker.
FREE TOOL: Any free QR generator + Google Drive | **SETUP:** 10 min
- ☐ **Self-service booking page**
A page where guests pick a time slot themselves. It blocks double bookings and sends the confirmation for you. Set your real capacity per slot, not your optimistic capacity.
FREE TOOL: Google Calendar appointment schedule | **SETUP:** 20 min
- ☐ **WhatsApp Business with a catalogue**
Switch your number to WhatsApp Business, add your dishes with prices as a catalogue, and set quick replies for the five questions you answer daily. Guests order in a chat they already use.
FREE TOOL: WhatsApp Business | **SETUP:** 30 min

SECTION 2

Stop answering the same questions

- ☐ **Away message and quick replies**
An automatic reply outside opening hours with your hours, address, parking and order link. Add saved replies for allergies, group bookings and delivery area so staff answer in one tap.
FREE TOOL: WhatsApp Business | **SETUP:** 15 min
- ☐ **Instant replies on Instagram and Facebook**
Set an automatic first reply on both channels with your hours and your order link. Most messages after closing time are the same three questions.
FREE TOOL: Meta Business Suite | **SETUP:** 15 min
- ☐ **Google profile filled in properly**
Fill in your own questions and answers in the Q&A section, keep holiday hours current, and add photos of the real dishes. This is the page most people see before they ever reach your site.
FREE TOOL: Google Business Profile | **SETUP:** 20 min

SECTION 3

Collect reviews on autopilot

- ☐ **Review QR on the receipt and the table**
Generate the short review link from your Google Business Profile, turn it into a QR code, and put it where the guest is already sitting still: the receipt, the bill folder, the table card.
FREE TOOL: Google Business Profile + QR generator | **SETUP:** 10 min
- ☐ **Automatic review request after the order**
Connect your order form to an email that goes out a few hours later, not immediately. Ask one question, then link straight to the review page. Delay it so the guest has actually eaten.
FREE TOOL: Zapier free plan or Google Forms | **SETUP:** 25 min
- ☐ **Saved replies for reviews**
Write three replies in advance: one for a great review, one for a mixed one, one for a bad one. Reply within a day. Future guests read your reply more carefully than the complaint itself.
FREE TOOL: Notes app or Google Doc | **SETUP:** 15 min

SECTION 4

Marketing that runs while you cook

- ☐ **A month of social posts in one sitting**
Write thirty short posts in one hour using the prompt below, then schedule them all at once. Posting daily is not the hard part, deciding daily what to post is.
FREE TOOL: ChatGPT + Meta Business Suite scheduler | **SETUP:** 45 min
- ☐ **A guest list you actually own**
Add an optional email field to your order form and collect addresses with permission. Send one message a month: the new dish, the holiday hours, the quiet-Tuesday offer. Social platforms rent you their audience, this list is yours.
FREE TOOL: Brevo or Mailchimp free plan | **SETUP:** 30 min

Copy this prompt into ChatGPT

You are the social media manager for a [type of restaurant] in [city].
 Our style is [warm and casual / modern / traditional]. Our best dishes are [three dishes].
 Write 30 short Instagram captions, one per day for a month. Vary between:
 dish of the day, behind the scenes in the kitchen, the story of one ingredient,
 a staff member, a guest question, and one offer for a quiet weekday.
 Keep each under 30 words, no hashtags in the caption, add 5 hashtags separately.

THE PLAN**Your first 30 days**

WEEK	FOCUS	WHAT YOU SET UP	WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE
Week 1	Take the pressure off service	Items 1 and 2: online order form and the table QR code. Test both from your own phone.	Fewer calls during the rush, orders arriving in writing instead of shouted across the pass.
Week 2	Stop repeating yourself	Items 5, 6 and 7: away message, instant replies, Google profile filled in.	Evening messages answer themselves. Staff stop giving four different answers.
Week 3	Build the rating	Items 8, 9 and 10: review QR, delayed review request, saved replies.	A steady trickle of new reviews instead of only the angry ones.
Week 4	Fill the quiet days	Items 11 and 12: a month of posts scheduled, first email to your own list.	Something to point at on a slow Tuesday that does not cost you a discount.

BEFORE YOU START**Five mistakes that waste the effort**

- Asking for the review too early. A request that arrives while the guest is still chewing reads as pushy and gets ignored.
- Hiding the order link. If it is not in your Instagram bio, your Google profile and your WhatsApp away message, it does not exist.
- Free plan limits discovered on your busiest night. Check the monthly send and automation limits before you rely on a tool.
- Nobody watching the inbox. Automation collects messages faster than before, so someone still has to open them once a day.
- Automating around a broken menu. If two dishes cause every question, fix the menu wording first. That is a five minute job that removes half the messages.

TRACK IT

Who does what, and when it was done

Print this page and hang it in the office. An automation without a name next to it does not get finished.

#	AUTOMATION	OWNER	DONE ON
1	Online order form		
2	Table and takeaway QR code		
3	Self-service booking page		
4	WhatsApp Business with a catalogue		
5	Away message and quick replies		
6	Instant replies on Instagram and Facebook		
7	Google profile filled in properly		
8	Review QR on the receipt and the table		
9	Automatic review request after the order		
10	Saved replies for reviews		
11	A month of social posts in one sitting		
12	A guest list you actually own		

Want this built for you instead?

The checklist above is the free route, and it works. If you would rather have one app that does the ordering, the menu and the bookings under your own name, that is what I build. Two live examples of real restaurant apps are linked in the video description.

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