# MARGIN & MENU

# THE RESTAURANT FINANCIAL LEAK CHECKLIST

A practical 10-minute check for restaurant owners who want to find the places money may be leaking out of the business.

**How to use this checklist:** Check each item you can confidently answer “yes” to. Anything you cannot verify is a potential control gap—not proof that money is being lost.

## 1. POS & SALES CONTROLS

- ■ POS sales are reviewed and reconciled regularly.
- ■ Credit-card deposits can be traced from POS sales to the bank.
- ■ Cash sales are separately identified and reconciled.
- ■ Voids, refunds, discounts, and comps are reviewed.
- ■ Open checks and unusual adjustments are investigated.

## 2. CASH & DEPOSITS

- ■ Every drawer starts with a documented cash bank.
- ■ Each shift has a clearly responsible employee.
- ■ Opening and closing cash counts are documented.
- ■ Overages and shortages are tracked rather than hidden.
- ■ Cash deposits are verified and reconciled to POS activity.

## 3. FOOD, BEVERAGE & INVENTORY

- ■ Food and beverage COGS are tracked separately when appropriate.
- ■ Inventory is counted consistently using the same units.
- ■ Vendor invoices are checked against what was actually received.
- ■ Recipes reflect current portions and ingredient costs.
- ■ Actual usage is compared with theoretical usage.
- ■ Waste, spoilage, employee meals, and comps are recorded.

## 4. LABOR & PAYROLL

- ■ Labor cost is compared with sales regularly.
- ■ Schedules reflect actual sales patterns.
- ■ Overtime is monitored before it occurs.
- ■ Clock-ins and clock-outs are reviewed.
- ■ Manager/owner labor is treated consistently in reporting.

## 5. ACCOUNTING & RECONCILIATION

- ■ Bank accounts are reconciled regularly.
- ■ POS clearing accounts reconcile to actual settlements.
- ■ Sales tax and payroll tax liabilities are tracked.
- ■ Accounts payable is current and understood.
- ■ Owner draws/distributions are clearly separated from operating expenses.

## 6. CASH FLOW & PROFITABILITY

- ■ You know your current available operating cash.
- ■ You know what major payments are due over the next 30 days.
- ■ You monitor prime cost (COGS + labor).
- ■ You know your restaurant's actual profit margin.
- ■ You can explain why cash changed even when the P&L; looks profitable.

## YOUR QUICK SCORE

Count the boxes you checked. This is a screening tool, not a financial audit.

| YES CHECKS | WHAT IT SUGGESTS |
|---|---|
| 30+ | Strong basic controls — look for optimization opportunities. |
| 20–29 | Several gaps deserve attention. |
| 10–19 | Meaningful financial-control risk. |
| 0–9 | Start with the fundamentals before trying to scale. |

# WANT TO KNOW WHERE YOUR MONEY IS ACTUALLY GOING?

Margin & Menu's 360° Restaurant Financial Audit examines the systems behind your sales, POS, accounting, inventory, labor, cash handling, and profitability to identify control gaps and prioritize the fixes that matter most.

**START YOUR 360° RESTAURANT FINANCIAL AUDIT**
**marginandmenu.com/360-audit/**