

Bakery & Patisserie Checklists

Goods-In · Opening & Bake Plan · Display & Chilled Control · Cake Orders · Allergens & Labels · Closing, Unsold & Waste

Goods-In & Receiving

Flour, fillings, bought-in cake, and par-baked stock. Accept only what will sell in time, and date it before it leaves the door.

ACCEPT ONLY STOCK THAT WILL SELL IN TIME

- ☐ **Reject bought-in bakery under your minimum days-to-expiry**
Short-dated cake and pastry is waste you've already paid for. Set a minimum shelf life, and refuse anything under it, every delivery, no exceptions.
- ☐ **Check the temperature of chilled cream- or custard-filled deliveries when they arrive; reject anything above 8°C (46°F)**
Cream-filled product that arrives warm never fully cools back down. It spoils before its date and you lose the sale too.
- ☐ **Count every bread, roll, and par-baked item against the order, and log any difference**
Getting too little of a bestseller means you sell out by mid-morning. Getting too much of a slow item means you throw it out tonight. Record both with the supplier.
- ☐ **Check for crushed items, collapsed decoration, and split par-baked crusts**
Damaged bakery items can't be sold at full price and won't look good in the display case. Reject them and get credit instead of marking them down.

SET UP FLOUR, FATS, AND FILLINGS TO ROTATE SAFELY

- ☐ **Label every bin you pour ingredients into with the product name, lot number, best-before date, and allergens**
An unlabelled bin of flour, nut meal, or dried fruit is how the wrong allergen ends up in a recipe. Bakery is the biggest category in allergen recalls.
- ☐ **Store nut, sesame and gluten-containing ingredients below and away from free-from stock**
Gravity and flour dust can spread allergens (cross-contact) on their own. Keeping ingredients separate when they arrive is cheaper than a failed gluten test on a finished cake.
- ☐ **Record the best-before date when stock arrives, and put new stock behind existing stock (the oldest stock first, or FIFO)**
You can't rotate stock you haven't dated. Dating stock as it arrives is the cheapest way to cut losses from expired stock.

Opening & Bake Plan

Clear out yesterday's stock, check the prover, then set today's bake waves using yesterday's numbers, not just what fits on the shelf.

CLEAR YESTERDAY BEFORE YOU BAKE TODAY

- ☐ **Deal with every carry-over item first: cutting prices (markdown), staff sale, donation, or waste - log it by item**
Yesterday's bread needs a decision, not just sitting there. Recover some cash on it before you add fifty fresh loaves next to it.
- ☐ **Check that the prover and retarder are at the right settings, and humidity is steady, before the first load**
If the prover drifts overnight, you lose the whole first wave. Under-proofed dough can't be sold, not even with a price cut.

BAKE TO MATCH HOW MUCH SELLS THROUGH THE DAY, NOT TO FILL THE SHELF

- ☐ **Set today's bake waves using yesterday's hour-by-hour sales, not a fixed tray count**
Baking the same amount every day guarantees you throw out the same amount every day. Waves matched to how sales rise and fall are the best way to stop overbaking.
- ☐ **Hold back your set share of every bread item for later waves**
This protects afternoon customers from an empty shelf, and stops morning overbaking that turns into tonight's leftover stock.
- ☐ **Par-bake to your recorded percentage of full bake time, and log the core temperature of the crumb**
How far you par-bake affects staling and taste, and you can measure it. Record it so the next wave repeats a good bake instead of guessing.
- ☐ **Only bake off frozen and par-baked stock to match the forecast for the next wave**
Frozen stock is your buffer against a stockout. The moment you bake it, it starts to spoil and the clock on waste begins.

OPEN READY TO SELL

- ☐ **Fill room-temperature shelves 100% full. Fill the chilled cream cabinet only to match first-wave demand**
Room-temperature bread sells better when the shelf looks full. Chilled cream-filled stock sells on freshness and a short shelf life - never treat the two the same way.
- ☐ **Put out today's allergen chart and gluten-free production plan before you open**
Counter staff can't answer an allergy question from memory, and the free-from bake has to happen first. Decide both before your first customer.

- ☐ **Confirm every bestseller item is baked, faced, and priced correctly**
An empty bestseller slot at opening costs you the sale and the customer's visit. A wrong price costs you profit on every unit sold all day.

HYGIENE & SAFETY

- ☐ **Wash your hands and put on clean gloves before you handle food.**
Dirty hands and gloves carry germs onto food and can make customers sick.
- ☐ **Ask each staff member if they feel sick before their shift starts.**
A sick worker can spread illness to customers through the food they touch.
- ☐ **Check sanitizer strength (ppm) meets the label before you use it.**
Weak sanitizer does not kill germs on surfaces and tools.
- ☐ **Check that allergen-only bowls, tools, and tins are clean and ready before you use them.**
This confirms no gluten, nuts, or dairy got onto allergen-free equipment overnight.
- ☐ **Walk the bakery for signs of pests, such as droppings or gnaw marks, before you open.**
Early signs let you act before pests reach food or ingredients.

Display, Turnover & Chilled Control

Cream-filled items at 0–5°C, room-temperature shelves full and faced, and an hourly check on what's actually selling.

CHILLED CREAM-FILLED CONTROL

- ☐ **Log the chilled cake and cream cabinet three times a day, and hold it at 0–5°C (32–41°F)**
Display temperature is the biggest thing you can control for cream-cake safety. A cabinet that drifts out of range spoils stock before its date.
- ☐ **Return cream-, custard-, and soft-cheese-filled items to 0–5°C (32–41°F) as soon as decorating or restocking is done**
Most temperature problems happen at the bench and during service, not in the fridge. The clock starts the moment the tray leaves the cabinet.
- ☐ **Put a date code on every cream-filled item based on its short shelf life, and pull it on that day**
These items last days, not weeks. A missed date code turns a sellable cake into a food safety problem.

KEEP THE DISPLAY CASE FULL AND SELLING

- ☐ **Combine trays and rearrange the display every hour**
Two half-empty trays look picked-over. One full tray looks fresh. It's the same stock, but it sells differently.
- ☐ **Move high-profit and slow-selling room-temperature items to eye level and the checkout area during the midday slow period**
Put the items you need to clear where customers will see them first, before you have to cut the price at 4pm.
- ☐ **Log hour-by-hour sales for each item, to help build tomorrow's wave plan**
Hour-by-hour sales data is what wave baking is built on. Without it, tomorrow's bake is just a guess, with the same errors as today.

ROOM-TEMPERATURE COMPARED WITH CHILLED, AND CUTTING PRICES STEP BY STEP

- ☐ **Review weekly which items are kept at room temperature and which are kept chilled**
Chilling bread that doesn't need it makes it stale faster and takes up case space. Leaving a filled item at room temperature risks the whole batch. Review the split yourself - don't just keep doing what was done before.
- ☐ **Start cutting prices step by step at the first afternoon wave: cut the price, then bundle it, then offer it to staff or donate it, then throw it out**
If you cut the price at 3pm, you recover most of the cash. At 6pm, you recover only a fraction. Thrown out, you recover nothing.

Cake Orders, Decorating & Collection

A custom cake that's wrong, late, or never picked up is a 100% loss, plus you may have to give a refund. Get the order right the first time.

TAKE THE ORDER ONCE, TAKE IT RIGHT

- ☐ **Read back the name, contact details, pickup date and time, size, flavor, and exact wording; have the customer sign the order slip**
Every custom cake is made for one buyer. Get one detail wrong, and you can't sell that cake to anyone else.
- ☐ **Record every allergy the customer tells you on the order slip, the kitchen ticket, and the box label**
An allergy noted at the counter but not passed on to the kitchen is exactly how a labelling mistake happens - and it's preventable.
- ☐ **Take a deposit and log the order in one shared book or system**
Orders kept only in one person's head go missing on their day off. An order with no deposit and no show-up is a total loss. No published data exists on custom-order error rates, so this check creates that data for you.

DECORATE WITHOUT CROSS-CONTACT

- ☐ **Make gluten-free and nut-free cakes first, on cleaned surfaces, using tools and tins used only for those cakes**
Cakes are the worst bakery item for cross-contact. Making them first thing in the day is the method that actually works.
- ☐ **Check the allergen label on every decoration, topper, filling, and coloring before it goes on the cake**
The cake itself is usually not the problem. The bought-in decoration, ganache, or topper is where an undeclared milk, soy, or nut allergen usually comes from.
- ☐ **Return cream and fresh-dairy-filled cakes to 0–5°C (32–41°F) between decorating steps**
A cake that sits out through three decorating steps has already spent hours at an unsafe temperature before it even reaches the customer.

TRACK EVERY CAKE UNTIL IT'S PICKED UP

- ☐ **Label the finished cake with the customer's name, pickup date and time, and the full ingredient and allergen list**
The label is the last check before the cake leaves the shop, and it's what an inspector or an allergic customer will read.
- ☐ **Confirm the order with the customer before pickup, and follow up on uncollected cakes the same day**
An uncollected cake can't be sold at full price by tomorrow. Most cream-filled items last under 5 days, so a reminder call can save the sale, but a day of silence means it gets thrown out.
- ☐ **Log every order mistake and its cause, and review the list every week**
Wrong date, wrong wording, missed allergy - the same mistakes keep happening until someone writes them down.

Allergen & Label Control

Bakery is the biggest category in major allergen recalls, and most of it comes from labels, not contamination. This is the cheapest disaster to prevent.

GET THE LABEL RIGHT - IT IS THE NUMBER ONE RECALL CAUSE

- ☐ **Check egg, milk, gluten, tree nut, peanut, sesame, and soy labels against the current recipe card every morning**
Recipes change over time, but labels don't always keep up. A daily check stops an old recipe going out on today's label.
- ☐ **Recheck the label as soon as you change a recipe, supplier, or ingredient**
A swapped ingredient, like a different margarine, a new filling, or a different topper, is the most common source of an undeclared allergen.
- ☐ **Confirm the date mark is present and easy to read on every packaged item**
A missing date mark is a labelling mistake on its own, and it's the only signal telling staff when to pull the product.

STOP CROSS-CONTACT AT THE BENCH

- ☐ **Make gluten-free items first, on cleaned surfaces, using bowls, blades, tins, and prover shelves used only for gluten-free**
Shared benches are where 'gluten-free' items fail the 20 ppm test. Doing gluten-free first, with its own equipment, is what actually works.
- ☐ **Keep free-from products covered and kept apart in the display case, never under an open bread shelf**
You can make a safe gluten-free cake and still contaminate it in the last few feet, on the shelf, in front of the customer.
- ☐ **Control flour dust: keep free-from products away from dusting, sieving, or scaling**
Flour dust floats in the air and can't be seen - that's cross-contact you can't spot. It can still land on a bench two metres away, even after it's been wiped down.

ANSWER THE CUSTOMER CORRECTLY

- ☐ **Keep a written allergen chart at the counter that covers every item, including loose and unwrapped ones**
Loose bakery items have no package to read for allergens. The counter chart is the only place the answer exists, so keep it current and within reach.
- ☐ **Never guess. If the chart doesn't cover an item, don't sell it as free-from**
One confident wrong answer at the counter can send someone to the hospital and lead to a claim. Saying 'I'll check' costs you nothing.

Closing, Unsold & Waste

Count what didn't sell, use it to rebuild tomorrow's bake waves, and protect the stock that carries over.

RECORD THE NUMBERS THAT FIX TOMORROW'S BAKE

- ☐ **Count and log unsold items by item and by bake wave**
Total waste only tells you that you baked too much. Waste by wave tells you which wave to cut back. Only one of those actually helps tomorrow.
- ☐ **Record how much you recovered from price cuts: what sold at a lower price compared with what was thrown out**
Without this number, you can't tell if your price cut was too small, too late, or on the wrong items.
- ☐ **Note every stockout and when it happened**
An item that sold out at 11am is a bigger opportunity than one that lasted until close. It tells you where to bake more, not less.

SET TOMORROW UP

- ☐ **Rebuild tomorrow's wave plan using today's unsold and stockout numbers**
The plan only works if you use yesterday's numbers to build it. This is what brings overbaking down, week by week.
- ☐ **Order more flour, fillings, and bought-in items when stock is below your target level (par), before the order cut-off time**
Missing the cut-off means a stockout on a bestseller the next morning. That's the one kind of waste you can't fix with a price cut.
- ☐ **Adjust any sale-or-return or take-back delivery order to match what you actually sold**
Take-back deals hide over-ordering, because returning stock doesn't seem to cost you anything, until it shows up in your losses and your environmental impact.

PROTECT STOCK OVERNIGHT

- ☐ **Seal, date, and return cream-filled and chilled products to 0–5°C (32–41°F); leave the cabinets switched on**
Overnight is the longest stretch a chilled cake goes unwatched. Sealed, dated, and cold is the cheapest way to avoid waste.
- ☐ **Bag or cover room-temperature products; put par-baked and frozen stock back in the freezer, not left on the rack**
Par-baked stock left out overnight stops being useful as backup stock, and it loses quality. You paid for that flexibility, don't let it go stale on a rack.
- ☐ **Weekly: calculate waste as a percentage of bakery sales, and compare it to your target**
Bakery has the highest losses of any perishable department. The only way to bring that number down is for someone to check it every week.

HYGIENE & SAFETY

- ☐ **Clean and sanitize every worktable, bench, and hand tool after the last bake.**
This removes food residue and germs before they can grow overnight.

Weekly Checks

Do these once a week, not every day.

WEEKLY HYGIENE & EQUIPMENT CHECKS

- ☐ **Do a full pest inspection each week. Check traps, corners, and entry points.**
A full inspection finds pest problems that the daily glance can miss.
- ☐ **Calibrate every food thermometer and probe once a week.**
An inaccurate thermometer can show food is safe when it is not.
- ☐ **Deep-clean and sanitize the mixers, ovens, probers, worktables, cake tins, and utensils once a week.**
Daily cleaning misses the flour, fat, and dough residue that builds up over time.