

Bubble Tea, Boba & Juice Bar Checklists

Goods-In · Opening · Tapioca Pearls & Toppings · Produce & Blenders · Sugar, Ice & Seal · Closing, Waste & Cold Chain

Goods-In & Receiving

Fruit, milk and milk substitutes, tea leaves, pearls, syrups and toppings. Only accept stock that will sell in time – and date it before it leaves the door.

ACCEPT ONLY STOCK THAT WILL SELL IN TIME

- ☐ **Check the temperature of milk, milk substitutes, yoghurt and prepped fruit at the door - reject anything above 5°C (41°F)**
Keeping food cold is the most-failed check in US FDA fast-food-format inspections, at 68.24% out of compliance - a delivery accepted warm starts your day already off track.
- ☐ **Check each crate of fruit for bruising, mould and split skin, and count every crate against the order**
Bruised fruit gives less juice and rots the fruit around it; a short delivery is a mid-week stockout you already paid for.
- ☐ **Check the days left before expiry on milk, milk substitutes, purees, jellies and popping boba - refuse anything under your minimum**
Syrups and toppings with a short shelf life become bin waste before they ever reach the menu board.
- ☐ **Keep a current supplier certificate of analysis (COA) or spec sheet on file for tapioca pearls, jellies and drink powders**
Every boba product Consumer Reports tested contained lead, and three of the four were above half of the safe limit - supplier paperwork is the only way to know what you are really selling.

DATE IT AND ROTATE IT BEFORE IT LEAVES THE DOOR

- ☐ **Write the date on every carton, syrup bottle, puree pouch and topping tub when it arrives**
Date-marking ready-to-eat food fails in 32.09% of US FDA fast-food inspections - you cannot rotate stock that nobody dated.
- ☐ **Put new stock behind older stock in the fridge, dry store and topping rail - use the oldest stock first (FIFO)**
Sell the oldest stock first. The syrup you forget at the back of the shelf is the one you end up throwing away.
- ☐ **Write down the supplier and batch number for every tea-leaf and botanical lot**
In one city inspection, 12% of tea products failed for too much pesticide residue - keeping records is what turns a supplier problem into a loss you can limit.

Opening - Brew, Cook & Set Up to Sell

Make the equipment safe, cook and label the first batches, then set up the counter to sell. Never build a drink on a machine you have not cleaned today.

MAKE THE EQUIPMENT SAFE BEFORE THE FIRST DRINK

- ☐ **Take apart, wash and sanitize blender jugs, juicer screens, shakers, dispensing taps and the sealer head before first use**
Surfaces that touch food fail sanitation in 40.94% of US FDA fast-food inspections, and dirty equipment is the top violation at juice-format shops in NYC inspection records.
- ☐ **Open the ice machine: check the bin, chute and scoop, and confirm the last deep-clean date is still on schedule**
Coliform bacteria were above the safe limit in 51.4% of ice samples across 105 food outlets - ice touches every drink you sell.
- ☐ **Mix sanitizer to the strength shown on the label, test it with a strip, and write down the reading**
Sanitizer too weak cleans nothing, and sanitizer too strong spoils the taste - only a test strip tells you which one you have. One model of a foodborne-illness outbreak at a single US fast food restaurant put the cost from USD 4,000 for 5 sick people to USD 1.9 million for 250.
- ☐ **Stock the handwash station (soap, towels, hot water) and wash your hands every time you enter the bar**
Handwashing fails the rules in 65.64% of US FDA fast-food-format inspections - it is the cheapest check in the building, and the first one people skip.

COOK, BREW AND LABEL THE FIRST BATCHES

- ☐ **Cook the first pearl batch to spec and label the pot with cook time AND discard time**
A pot with no discard time gets sold all day; the label is the control, not somebody's memory across a shift change.
- ☐ **Brew tea to spec and label the urn with brew time and discard time**
Tea held too long tastes stewed and quietly loses you repeat customers - the label is what stops it being poured at hour six.
- ☐ **Wash, trim and rotate today's fruit; keep all cut fruit at 4°C (39°F) or below**
Listeria did not grow on fresh-cut fruit held at a steady 4°C (39°F) over 8 days, but grew 1.37 log at 8°C (46°F) - those few degrees are the entire control.

SET THE COUNTER UP TO SELL

- ☐ **Confirm the top three drinks and every topping are in stock, and that sugar/ice options, prices and offers on the board are correct**
A missing topping makes the drink worse, and a wrong price costs you profit all day - and price changes how much people buy far more than any nutrition note does.
- ☐ **Where your area runs a hygiene rating or grading scheme, display your current rating at the door and on your online listings**
In the UK Food Standards Agency's 2024 audit, 74–75% of food businesses were active online, but only 2–4% showed their rating there - free trust most of your competitors leave unused.

HYGIENE & SAFETY

- ☐ **Put on new gloves before you touch ready-to-eat toppings, pearls, or drinks.**
Bare hands can pass germs onto food you will not cook again.
- ☐ **Change your gloves after you touch trash, raw fruit, money, or your phone.**
Used gloves carry germs from one task to the next task.
- ☐ **Ask every staff member if they feel sick before the shift starts.**
A sick worker can pass illness through food and drinks.
- ☐ **Send home any staff member with vomiting, diarrhea, or a fever.**
These signs mean a high risk of illness spreading to customers.
- ☐ **List all allergens in syrups, toppings, and dairy substitutes on the menu board.**
Customers with allergies must see this information before they order.
- ☐ **Check the shop for pests, including gaps around doors and windows.**
A quick daily look catches pest problems while they are still small.

Tapioca Pearls, Jellies & Toppings

Cook within a time window you can prove, rotate the topping rail, and weigh what you throw away. No published study sets the pearl window - your log does.

COOK AND HOLD TO A WINDOW YOU CAN PROVE

- ☐ **Give every cooked batch of pearls, jellies or puddings a batch card: cooked at, discard at**
Cooking a batch and forgetting it is how pearls get served hours past their best texture - and date-marking already fails 32.09% of US FDA fast-food inspections without anyone even trying.
- ☐ **Cook to the next 2–3 hours of demand, not to the size of the pot**
114 restaurants cut food waste 26% by weight in 12 months, with a typical 7:1 payback - cooking to match demand drove most of that.
- ☐ **Discard at the end of the hold window and weigh what you discarded**
The discard weight sets tomorrow's batch size. No published study sets this window, so your own log is the only evidence that exists for your shop.
- ☐ **Keep syrup-held pearls and toppings covered and out of the splash zone of the service line**
36% of retail bubble teas in one sampled market failed microbiological standards - an open topping tub on a wet counter is the easiest way in.

TOPPINGS ROTATE OR THEY COST YOU

- ☐ **Write the open date and use-by date on every opened syrup, puree, jelly and popping-boba tub**
An undated opened tub is a guess you are serving to a paying customer - and date-marking ready-to-eat food was out of compliance in 129 of 402 US FDA fast-food inspections (32.09%).
- ☐ **Use the oldest stock first (FIFO) on the topping rail at every changeover - oldest to the front, new tubs behind**
The tub at the back is the tub that goes out of date; rotation turns near-date stock into sales instead of waste.
- ☐ **Pull and log anything past use-by before service starts, not during the rush**
A tub pulled mid-rush has already been served from - this check only works if it happens before the first order.

PROTECT THE TOPPING SUPPLY CHAIN

- ☐ **Ask the supplier for a new certificate of analysis (COA) on pearls, powders and jellies after any change to formula, brand or origin**
All four boba products tested by Consumer Reports contained lead - at 83%, 70%, 63% and 29% of the safe limit - so a quiet formula change is a quiet change in risk.
- ☐ **Log which toppings actually sell, by drink, each week**
A topping that does not sell is cash sitting in a fridge going out of date - this log is what you cut from the next order.

Fresh Produce, Juicing & Blending

Wash it, cut it to demand, keep it cold - then treat the blender and juicer as the germ risk they really are.

WASH AND ROTATE THE FRUIT

- ☐ **Wash all whole produce under running water before cutting or juicing - every item, every time**
Running water removed 2.13–2.62 log of pathogens from tomatoes, and 1.49–1.69 log from lettuce, in IAFP testing. Skipping the rinse removes nothing at all.
- ☐ **Do not expect a store-bought produce wash to do more than plain water**
Store-bought vegetable wash was the least effective treatment tested, with most reductions under 2 log - pay for the habit of rinsing, not for the bottle.
- ☐ **Cut fruit to the next 2–3 hours of demand and hold it at 4°C (39°F) or below**
Fresh-cut fruit at a steady 4°C (39°F) had no Listeria growth over 8 days; at 8°C (46°F) it grew 1.37 log - and a fridge that drifts warm after day one still gave 1.23 log.
- ☐ **Rotate the fruit bin daily - oldest forward, bruised out - and log what you dumped**
Fruit shrink is the biggest waste you can fix in a juice bar, and only the log tells you which item to buy less of next week.

THE MACHINE IS THE CONTAMINATION PATH

- ☐ **Take apart and sanitize juicer screens, augers, blender jugs and gaskets on the posted schedule, not just at close**
Food-contact surfaces fail 40.94% of US FDA fast-food inspections, and 'food-contact surface not properly washed, rinsed and sanitized after each use' was cited 421 times across juice-format shops in NYC inspection records.
- ☐ **Rinse the blender jug between builds, and fully sanitize it between dairy, non-dairy and allergen changes**
The rinse protects the taste of the next drink; the full sanitize protects the customer with the allergy - and both protect the sale.
- ☐ **Check gaskets, seals and blade housings weekly for film and residue**
A blender can be clean where you look and dirty where you do not - the gasket is where build-up survives a rinse.

PROVE THE STANDARD IS REACHABLE

- ☐ **Check the first juice of the day for colour, separation and off-smell before it goes on sale**
100 untreated fresh and squeezed juices in one European study met every regulatory limit, with E. coli below detection in all of them - a clean machine is a standard you can reach, not luck.

Service Line - Sugar, Ice, Seal & Speed

The drink is built in front of the customer in under four minutes. Read the ticket back, measure the syrup, keep the ice clean, check the seal.

BUILD TO THE TICKET, NOT TO HABIT

- ☐ **Read the sugar level, ice level and toppings back to the customer before you build**
51% of the order mistakes in a 2025 multi-brand US drive-thru accuracy study came from missed ice requests in drinks. Reading the order back is the cheapest fix available.
- ☐ **Measure syrup with a calibrated pump or scale - never free-pour to a sugar level**
Sampled tea drinks ranged from 7.1 g to 72 g of sugar per portion, and within a single drink type the highest was 1.7–4.6 times the lowest - free-pouring is why.
- ☐ **Calibrate syrup pumps weekly and after every bottle or syrup change**
A drifting pump silently changes both the sugar you promised and the syrup cost of every cup you sell.
- ☐ **Serve 0% / 25% / 50% / 75% / 100% sugar exactly as ordered - never 'correct' it upward for the customer**
'No added sugar' versions still averaged 15 g of sugar per portion across sampled outlets, ranging up to 43 g. The sugar level the customer chose is a promise you keep or break.

ICE, SEAL AND THE DRINK THAT LEAVES THE COUNTER

- ☐ **Use a scoop kept just for ice, stored outside the ice bin; never store cups, bottles or hands in the ice**
Coliform bacteria exceeded limits in 51.4% of sampled ice, and E. coli was found in 6.7% - the scoop and the hands are how it gets there.
- ☐ **Wipe the sealer head and film path at each time of day, and check every seal before handoff**
A failed seal is a spilled drink, a refund and a bad review - and since no published data on sealer hygiene or leak rates exists, your check log is the only record there is.
- ☐ **Sanitize shakers, jugs and spoons between builds, not at the end of the rush**
Food-contact-surface sanitation fails 40.94% of US FDA fast-food inspections, and the rush is exactly when it gets skipped.

SPEED IS A SALES NUMBER

- ☐ **Time how long each order takes from placed to handed off during peak, and post the day's average on the bar**
One large chain's pilot cut average drink completion time by 2 minutes, and completed 75% of peak in-store orders in 4 minutes or less. A lost queue is revenue that never rings up.

- ☐ **Fix the two slowest steps in the build each week (topping reach, cup line-up, seal, handoff call)**
In drive-thru testing, removing order repetition saved 1 minute 25 seconds and clearer speakers saved 54 seconds - minutes come from small step changes, not from working faster.

Closing, Waste and Cold Chain

Write down the temperatures, take the machines apart to clean, weigh the waste, reorder for tomorrow. Never seal anything wet shut overnight.

CLOSE THE COLD CHAIN

- ☐ **Log fridge, under-counter and display temps three times a day, holding 0–5°C (32–41°F)**
Keeping food cold is out of compliance in 68.24% of US FDA fast-food-format inspections - catching a failing unit tonight saves a full case of milk and fruit tomorrow.
- ☐ **Act immediately if out of range: move stock, log the time, tell the manager, and do not sell anything held above 8°C (46°F)**
Fresh-cut fruit held at 8°C (46°F) grew 1.37 log of Listeria in 8 days - a fridge that drifts warm is a growth curve, not just an inconvenience.

STRIP, SANITIZE, AND LEAVE NOTHING WET AND CLOSED

- ☐ **Full strip-down sanitize of blenders, juicers, shakers, sealer and every dispensing tap**
Testing of dispensed drinks found 48% positive for coliform bacteria - overnight is when a machine you skipped grows germs, and an outbreak at a single small shop has been modelled from USD 4,000 to USD 1.9 million.
- ☐ **Empty, wash and dry pearl pots, syrup pumps and topping tubs; store them dry and covered**
A wet container sealed shut overnight is the easiest possible way to lose tomorrow's first batch.
- ☐ **Drain, wipe and air the ice bin on the posted schedule and record the deep-clean date**
93.3% of sampled ice carried some kind of bacteria - the bin needs the same care as a fridge, and no inspection rule will remind you.
- ☐ **Wash hands and switch to clean cloths before handling cleaned equipment**
Handwashing fails 65.64% of US FDA fast-food inspections - making clean equipment dirty again at close undoes the whole shift's work.

WRITE DOWN THE NUMBERS THAT PAY FOR TOMORROW

- ☐ **Log pearl, jelly, cut-fruit and juice waste by weight and reason**
Shops that measured waste by category cut it 26% by weight in 12 months and 58% over three years, with a typical 7:1 return - the log is what makes this happen.
- ☐ **Note every stockout, sell-out and topping that ran dry, with the time it happened**
A topping that runs dry at 4pm is a downgraded or lost drink - use that time to set tomorrow's par levels.
- ☐ **Reorder produce, milk, pearls, syrups, and toppings that are below par, before the supplier cut-off**
Missing the cut-off is a morning stockout on a signature drink; 76% of sites that invested in waste and stock discipline got their money back within the first year.

HYGIENE & SAFETY

- ☐ **Sanitize counters, prep tables, and door handles, then let them air dry.**
Sanitized surfaces stop germs from growing overnight.
- ☐ **Remove all trash and clean the waste and dumpster area before you lock up.**
Trash left out overnight attracts pests.
- ☐ **Check the shop again for pests before you lock up, including doors and windows.**
A clean, sealed shop overnight keeps pests from moving in.

Weekly Checks

Do these checks once a week. They are not part of the daily routine.

FULL PEST INSPECTION

- ☐ **Check every trap, corner, and doorway for pests once a week.**
A full weekly check finds problems a quick daily look can miss.
- ☐ **Write down any pest sighting, trap catch, or new gap in a wall or door.**
A written log proves the pest problem is tracked and fixed.

THERMOMETER & PROBE CALIBRATION

- ☐ **Check every thermometer and probe against an ice-water or boiling-water reference once a week.**
A thermometer that reads wrong can hide an unsafe food or drink temperature.
- ☐ **Adjust or replace any thermometer or probe that does not read correctly.**
A wrong reading can let unsafe food or drinks reach a customer.

ICE MACHINE DEEP CLEAN

- ☐ **Take apart the ice machine and deep-clean the bin, chute, curtain, and evaporator plate.**
Ice machines build up mold and slime that daily wiping does not remove.
 - ☐ **Sanitize all parts, put the ice machine back together, and record the date.**
A dated record proves the deep clean happened on schedule.
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