



Course: Hospitality
Section: ProStart Restaurant Management



James Rumsey
Technical Institute

Design a Food Truck

What You Will Do

Create your own food truck concept including a restaurant name and menu.

Materials You Will Need

- Paper
- Colored pencils/markers
- Ruler
- Computer with design software (optional)

Mobile Food Stands

Food trucks have been around since the days of selling workers lunch out of a horse-drawn cart. Chuck wagons were a common sight in wagon trains and among cowboys in the old west. Sometimes it's easier to bring the restaurant to the people than it is to expect them to come to you. Food trucks have become very popular in recent years. You can move around and reach customers who might not have come across town for lunch. Workers don't have to go far from their job to get food. Food trucks also let you sell food at events like festivals.

Things to Keep in Mind

- **Space:** Space is very limited in a food truck. It's best to keep your menu simple so you don't have to stock a lot of different ingredients or tools.
- **Speed:** Food trucks serve fast food. People want to get their order quickly. Anything that needs a lot of time to prepare needs to be done before you start serving. For example, barbecue takes hours to cook. You can do that the day before and reheat the food in the truck. If you're selling pizza, make the dough in advance.
- **Uniqueness:** What will set your truck apart from all the others? It's best to specialize. Rather than selling pizza, tacos, and burgers, just pick one style of food. Your menu and branding will set you apart. Food trucks typically have catchy names that people will remember.

Decide on a Menu

- **Main Dish** – Think about one dish as your specialty. That is going to be your main attraction.
- **Side Dishes** – What sides go well with that main dish? Think of two or three options.
- **Drinks** - What drinks will your customers want?
- **Alternatives** – You can't offer a huge menu that appeals to everyone. However, you can offer a range of items by varying some ingredients. For example, if you're selling hotdogs, you can offer several options for toppings. You could also offer a version of a hotdog that will appeal to vegans and vegetarians.

Branding

This is just as important as your menu. You're doing more than selling food. You're selling an experience. Branding is the image you create for your business. The business name and image tell people what to expect.

Think of a couple of adjectives you want people to associate with your food truck (fast, friendly, spicy, comforting, etc.) What imagery might help communicate that?

Another approach would be to give your business a theme. If you plan to sell Hawaiian food, use that as your theme. Give it a name that evokes the Hawaiian culture. Make the truck and menu look Hawaiian. Give you menu items names that tie in with the theme. This will make it very clear to customers of what to expect.

Design

Now that you know what you are going to sell, what the business will be called, and how to brand it, design your menu and truck.

Menu – Start with the information your customers need such as names of the dishes, brief descriptions of each, and pricing. Next, create a design that matches your branding concept. Keep in mind that legibility is more important than artistic flare. Designers follow the adage “form follows function”. In other words, useful is better than pretty.

Truck Design – You can print the truck template on the next page to draw on or use it as a reference to draw a truck outline. Decide where and how big the serving window will be on the side of the truck. Where will the menu board go? What graphics will make the truck attention-getting and recognizable?

