Café Startup Equipment Checklist: What You Do (& Don’t) Need!

When you’re opening a cafe or a coffee shop, it can be difficult to think through each and every item you’ll need to run a successful business. From industrial bean grinders to refrigeration systems, flatware, paper products, storage, and more – the number of items you need can be dizzying.



Food and drink preparation

- [ ] Drip coffeemakers
- [ ] Coffee presses
- [ ] A high-quality espresso machine
- [ ] Industrial coffee grinders
- [ ] A water filtration system
- [ ] Food preparation tables
- [ ] Food storage bins, bottles, and pumps
- [ ] Commercial blenders
- [ ] Ovens/toasters/grills
- [ ] An ice maker

Software

- [ ] A robust security system
- [ ] A POS system

- [ ] Employee management/scheduling software
- [ ] Payroll/accounting software

Storage and refrigeration

- [ ] Industrial refrigerators
- [ ] A large freezer (walk-in for larger businesses)
- [ ] Insulated containers for cream and milk
- [ ] Industrial shelving for dry storage
- [ ] Food storage containers for opened ingredients
- [ ] Industrial plastic wrap

Consumable Goods

- [ ] Napkins
- [ ] Insulated paper cups and lids
- [ ] Cardboard sleeves
- [ ] Plastic cups and lids
- [ ] Paper towels
- [ ] Straws
- [ ] Paper/cardboard plates

Dishes and flatware

- [ ] Plates
- [ ] Mugs
- [ ] Cups and drinking glasses
- [ ] Spoons, knives, and forks
- [ ] Drink preparation utensils

Cleanup and maintenance

- [ ] A 3-compartment sink for rinsing, washing, and sanitizing dishes
- [ ] Mop and dedicated mop closet/sink
- [ ] Rags and industrial cleaning spray
- [ ] Dishwasher

- [ ] Bus trays for dirty dishes
- [ ] Trash cans and bags
- [ ] Dumpster/trash compactor

Furniture and decor

- [ ] Tables and chairs
- [ ] Counters/bar seating
- [ ] Outdoor furniture and umbrellas
- [ ] Food prep/work counters
- [ ] Display/storage cases
- [ ] Overhead menus
- [ ] In-store menus and displays
- [ ] Interior/exterior lighting
- [ ] Wall art, framed photos/posters, etc.
- [ ] Audio systems

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