

MEROKEE WEB DESIGN

RESTAURANT SEO CHECKLIST

132 ACTIONABLE ITEMS

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO
SHOWING UP WHERE HUNGRY
CUSTOMERS ARE SEARCHING

WWW.MEROKEEVENTURES.COM


If someone in your city is searching "best Italian restaurant near me" or "pizza open now" — is your restaurant showing up? For most small restaurants, the answer is no. Not because the food isn't good, but because the digital foundations simply aren't in place.

This checklist covers everything your restaurant needs to compete in local search. From your Google Business Profile and on-page content, to technical setup, schema markup, backlinks, and reviews. It's the same framework we use at Merokee when auditing restaurant websites, broken down into clear, actionable tasks any restaurant owner or marketing team can follow.

Work through it section by section. Some items take five minutes. Others are one-time setups you'll never need to touch again. A few are ongoing habits that compound over time.

132 Items Across 10 Major Categories

One checklist to get your restaurant found.



This checklist covers everything a restaurant needs to compete in local search. But we know that for most restaurant owners, time is the one thing you never have enough of.

Between managing staff, suppliers, customers, and the hundred other things that come with running a hospitality business, SEO rarely makes it to the top of the priority list.

That's exactly why **Merokee Web** exists. We specialize in SEO, design, and digital marketing for small business websites — restaurants included. We'll audit where you stand, fix what's missing, and build a strategy that gets your restaurant showing up where it matters most.

No jargon. No long-term contracts. Just results. Reach us at:

[https://merokeeventures.com.](https://merokeeventures.com)

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Google Business Profile

- CLAIM AND VERIFY YOUR GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE LISTING
- CHOOSE PRIMARY CATEGORY AS 'RESTAURANT' (ADD RELEVANT SECONDARY CATEGORIES)
- ADD FULL ACCURATE NAP: NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER
- SET CORRECT BUSINESS HOURS INCLUDING HOLIDAY HOURS
- ADD SPECIAL/SEASONAL HOURS (E.G. CHRISTMAS EVE, NEW YEAR'S)
- WRITE A KEYWORD-RICH BUSINESS DESCRIPTION (750 CHARS MAX)
- UPLOAD HIGH-QUALITY PHOTOS: EXTERIOR, INTERIOR, FOOD, TEAM, MENU
- ADD YOUR FULL MENU (USE GOOGLE'S MENU EDITOR OR LINK TO MENU)
- ENABLE MESSAGING/CHAT FEATURE

Google Business Profile (continued)

- ADD ATTRIBUTES: DINE-IN, TAKEOUT, DELIVERY, PARKING, WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE, ETC.
- SET UP Q&A SECTION WITH COMMON QUESTIONS PRE-ANSWERED
- POST WEEKLY GOOGLE BUSINESS UPDATES (EVENTS, SPECIALS, OFFERS)
- RESPOND TO ALL REVIEWS — POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE — WITHIN 48 HOURS
- ADD BOOKING LINK (OPENTABLE, RESY, OR DIRECT RESERVATION URL)
- ADD ORDERING LINK (DOORDASH, UBER EATS, OR DIRECT ONLINE ORDERING)
- VERIFY YOUR PROFILE SHOWS CORRECTLY ON GOOGLE MAPS

Local SEO & Citations

- ENSURE NAP IS 100% CONSISTENT ACROSS ALL LISTINGS (EXACT SAME FORMAT)
- CLAIM AND OPTIMIZE YELP LISTING
- CLAIM AND OPTIMIZE BING PLACES FOR BUSINESS LISTING
- CLAIM APPLE MAPS LISTING (APPLE BUSINESS CONNECT)
- LIST ON TRIPADVISOR AND RESPOND TO REVIEWS
- LIST ON FOURSQUARE/SWARM
- LIST ON OPENTABLE, RESY, OR YOUR BOOKING PLATFORM OF CHOICE
- SUBMIT TO LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DIRECTORY
- GET LISTED ON ZOMATO AND OTHER FOOD-SPECIFIC DIRECTORIES

Local SEO & Citations (Continued)

- CLAIM FACEBOOK BUSINESS PAGE WITH FULL DETAILS AND HOURS
- LIST ON DATA AGGREGATORS: INFOGROUP, ACXIOM, LOCALEZE, FACTUAL
- SEARCH FOR AND CORRECT ANY DUPLICATE OR INCORRECT LISTINGS
- TARGET LOCAL KEYWORDS: '[CUISINE] RESTAURANT IN [CITY]', 'BEST [DISH] NEAR [NEIGHBORHOOD]'
- CREATE CITY/NEIGHBORHOOD LANDING PAGES IF YOU SERVE MULTIPLE AREAS
- EMBED GOOGLE MAP ON YOUR CONTACT PAGE

On-Page SEO

- INCLUDE TARGET KEYWORD IN THE H1 HEADING ON THE HOMEPAGE
- WRITE A UNIQUE, KEYWORD-RICH TITLE TAG FOR EVERY PAGE (50-60 CHARS)
- WRITE A COMPELLING META DESCRIPTION FOR EVERY PAGE (150-160 CHARS)
- USE H2/H3 HEADINGS LOGICALLY — DON'T SKIP HEADING LEVELS
- INCLUDE FULL ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER IN FOOTER ON EVERY PAGE
- CREATE A DEDICATED 'MENU' PAGE WITH TEXT-BASED CONTENT (NOT JUST A PDF)
- CREATE A DEDICATED 'ABOUT' PAGE WITH LOCATION, STORY, AND TEAM
- CREATE A DEDICATED 'CONTACT/RESERVATIONS' PAGE

On-Page SEO (continued)

- ADD ALT TEXT TO ALL IMAGES DESCRIBING CONTENT + KEYWORD WHERE NATURAL
- USE INTERNAL LINKS BETWEEN RELATED PAGES (MENU → RESERVATIONS, ABOUT → CONTACT)
- WRITE UNIQUE PAGE TITLES/DESCRIPTIONS FOR MENU, ABOUT, CONTACT, RESERVATIONS
- INCLUDE A CLEAR CALL TO ACTION ON EVERY PAGE (RESERVE, ORDER, CALL US)
- ADD OPENING HOURS IN TEXT ON YOUR WEBSITE (NOT JUST AN IMAGE)
- MENTION NEIGHBORHOOD, LANDMARKS, AND NEARBY AREAS NATURALLY IN COPY
- CREATE BLOG OR NEWS SECTION FOR CONTENT MARKETING (SEASONAL MENUS, EVENTS)

Technical SEO

- ENSURE SITE LOADS IN UNDER 3 SECONDS ON MOBILE (TEST WITH PAGESPEED INSIGHTS)
- SITE MUST BE FULLY MOBILE-RESPONSIVE — TEST ON REAL DEVICES
- INSTALL AN SSL CERTIFICATE (HTTPS://)
- CREATE AND SUBMIT AN XML SITEMAP TO GOOGLE SEARCH CONSOLE
- CREATE AND SUBMIT SITEMAP TO BING WEBMASTER TOOLS
- SET UP AND VERIFY GOOGLE SEARCH CONSOLE
- SET UP AND VERIFY BING WEBMASTER TOOLS
- FIX ALL CRAWL ERRORS SHOWN IN SEARCH CONSOLE
- ENSURE NO BROKEN LINKS (404 ERRORS) ON THE SITE
- SET CANONICAL TAGS ON ALL PAGES TO AVOID DUPLICATE CONTENT

Technical SEO (continued)

- CONFIGURE ROBOTS.TXT CORRECTLY (DON'T ACCIDENTALLY BLOCK SEARCH ENGINES)
- ENSURE IMAGES ARE COMPRESSED AND IN WEBP OR NEXT-GEN FORMAT
- IMPLEMENT LAZY LOADING FOR IMAGES BELOW THE FOLD
- AVOID MENU BEING PUBLISHED ONLY AS A NON-INDEXABLE PDF
- CHECK CORE WEB VITALS (LCP, CLS, FID/INP) IN SEARCH CONSOLE
- IMPLEMENT HREFLANG TAGS IF SITE IS MULTILINGUAL

Schema Markup {Structured Data}

- ADD RESTAURANT SCHEMA ([SCHEMA.ORG/RESTAURANT](https://schema.org/Restaurant)) TO HOMEPAGE
- INCLUDE 'NAME', 'ADDRESS', 'TELEPHONE', 'URL', 'OPENINGHOURS' IN RESTAURANT SCHEMA
- ADD 'SERVESCUISINE' AND 'PRICERANGE' (\$, \$\$, \$\$\$) IN SCHEMA
- ADD 'HASMENU' LINKING TO YOUR MENU PAGE IN SCHEMA
- ADD 'ACCEPTSRESERVATIONS' WITH BOOKING URL IN SCHEMA
- IMPLEMENT BREADCRUMBLIST SCHEMA ON INTERIOR PAGES
- ADD LOCALBUSINESS SCHEMA WITH GEO COORDINATES (LATITUDE/LONGITUDE)
- IMPLEMENT MENU SCHEMA FOR INDIVIDUAL MENU SECTIONS AND ITEMS

Schema Markup {Structured Data} (continued)

- ADD REVIEW/AGGREGATING SCHEMA IF YOU DISPLAY REVIEWS ON SITE
- ADD EVENT SCHEMA FOR UPCOMING EVENTS, LIVE MUSIC, SPECIALS
- VALIDATE ALL SCHEMA USING GOOGLE'S RICH RESULTS TEST TOOL
- VALIDATE SCHEMA WITH SCHEMA.ORG VALIDATOR
- CHECK FOR SCHEMA ERRORS IN GOOGLE SEARCH CONSOLE'S RICH RESULTS REPORT
- ADD FAQPAGE SCHEMA TO FAQ SECTION IF ONE EXISTS ON SITE

Backlinks & Off-Page SEO

- GET LISTED AND LINKED FROM LOCAL NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE RESTAURANT GUIDES
- PITCH TO LOCAL FOOD BLOGGERS AND INFLUENCERS FOR REVIEWS/FEATURES
- SUBMIT TO 'BEST RESTAURANTS IN [CITY]' ROUNDUP SITES AND DIRECTORIES
- PARTNER WITH LOCAL HOTELS TO GET LISTED ON THEIR CONCIERGE/DINING PAGES
- GET LINKED FROM LOCAL EVENT PAGES IF YOU HOST OR SPONSOR EVENTS
- CREATE SHAREABLE CONTENT (SEASONAL MENUS, RECIPES, EVENTS) TO EARN NATURAL LINKS
- GET PRESS COVERAGE FROM FOOD JOURNALISTS AND PR OUTREACH
- SUBMIT TO CULINARY SCHOOL WEBSITES, TOURISM BOARDS, AND VISITOR GUIDES

Backlinks & Off-Page SEO (Continued)

- ENSURE DELIVERY PLATFORMS (DOORDASH, UBER EATS, GRUBHUB) LINK TO YOUR SITE
- BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEIGHBORING BUSINESSES FOR CROSS-PROMOTION LINKS
- MONITOR BACKLINKS USING AHREFS, SEMRUSH, OR MOZ AND DISAVOW TOXIC LINKS
- ENCOURAGE FOOD BLOGGERS AND REVIEW SITES TO LINK TO YOUR OFFICIAL SITE

Reviews & Reputation

- ACTIVELY ASK SATISFIED GUESTS TO LEAVE A GOOGLE REVIEW (VERBALLY + ON RECEIPT)
- ADD A QR CODE AT TABLES AND AT THE REGISTER LINKING TO YOUR GOOGLE REVIEW PAGE
- SEND POST-VISIT REVIEW REQUEST EMAILS IF YOU COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESSES
- NEVER INCENTIVIZE OR FAKE REVIEWS — VIOLATES PLATFORM POLICIES
- RESPOND TO EVERY GOOGLE REVIEW (POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE)
- RESPOND TO EVERY YELP REVIEW
- RESPOND TO TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS
- MONITOR BRAND MENTIONS USING GOOGLE ALERTS
- ADDRESS NEGATIVE REVIEWS PROFESSIONALLY WITHOUT BEING DEFENSIVE
- AIM FOR A CONSISTENT STREAM OF NEW REVIEWS (RECENCY MATTERS TO ALGORITHMS)
- DISPLAY POSITIVE REVIEWS/TESTIMONIALS ON YOUR WEBSITE

Analytics & Tracking

- INSTALL GOOGLE ANALYTICS 4 (GA4) ON THE WEBSITE
- SET UP CONVERSION EVENTS: RESERVATION CLICKS, PHONE CLICKS, MENU VIEWS, ORDERS
- CONNECT GA4 TO GOOGLE SEARCH CONSOLE FOR KEYWORD DATA
- SET UP GOOGLE TAG MANAGER FOR CLEAN TAG MANAGEMENT
- TRACK CLICK-TO-CALL AS A CONVERSION EVENT
- TRACK FORM SUBMISSIONS (RESERVATION/CONTACT FORMS) AS CONVERSIONS
- MONITOR GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE INSIGHTS MONTHLY (VIEWS, DIRECTION REQUESTS, CALLS)
- REVIEW SEARCH CONSOLE PERFORMANCE REPORT MONTHLY FOR KEYWORD RANKINGS
- SET UP RANK TRACKING FOR TARGET KEYWORDS USING A TOOL (E.G. BRIGHTLOCAL)
- MONITOR LOCAL PACK APPEARANCE FOR KEY TERMS IN TARGET CITY
- RUN MONTHLY CITATION AUDIT TO CATCH NEW INCORRECT LISTINGS
- REVIEW CORE WEB VITALS MONTHLY AND ADDRESS REGRESSIONS

Content & Social Signals

- POST CONSISTENTLY ON INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK WITH LOCATION TAGS
- TAG YOUR RESTAURANT'S LOCATION IN EVERY SOCIAL MEDIA POST
- EMBED SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDS ON YOUR WEBSITE
- CREATE A GOOGLE BUSINESS POST FOR EVERY EVENT, SPECIAL, OR NEW MENU ITEM
- SHARE SEASONAL AND LIMITED-TIME OFFERS ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS
- USE LOCALLY RELEVANT HASHTAGS ON SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS
- ENCOURAGE USER-GENERATED CONTENT (REPOST CUSTOMER PHOTOS WITH PERMISSION)
- PUBLISH BLOG POSTS AROUND SEASONAL MENUS, LOCAL EVENTS, FOOD GUIDES
- CREATE 'BEST OF' OR 'HOW WE MAKE' CONTENT TO ATTRACT BACKLINKS AND SHARES

AI & Generative Search Visibility

- WRITE A CLEAR, WELL-STRUCTURED 'ABOUT' PAGE SPECIFICALLY CRAFTED FOR AI SUMMARIZATION — INCLUDE CUISINE TYPE, ATMOSPHERE, LOCATION CONTEXT, AND WHAT MAKES YOU UNIQUE
- ADD A NATURAL-LANGUAGE FAQ PAGE ANSWERING COMMON QUESTIONS: PARKING, RESERVATIONS, DIETARY OPTIONS, DRESS CODE, PRIVATE DINING — WRITTEN THE WAY PEOPLE ACTUALLY ASK
- OPTIMIZE YOUR COPY FOR CONVERSATIONAL AND QUESTION-BASED QUERIES: 'WHERE TO EAT [CUISINE] IN [CITY]', 'BEST RESTAURANT FOR A DATE NEAR [LANDMARK]'
- WRITE DESCRIPTIVE, SPECIFIC COPY ABOUT YOUR ATMOSPHERE, EXPERIENCE, AND SIGNATURE DISHES — AI USES THIS TO MATCH NUANCED, INTENT-DRIVEN QUERIES
- GET FEATURED IN LOCAL PRESS, FOOD BLOGS, AND 'BEST OF' LISTICLES — AI TOOLS LIKE CHATGPT AND PERPLEXITY HEAVILY CITE AUTHORITATIVE THIRD-PARTY SOURCES WHEN RECOMMENDING RESTAURANTS
- EARN MENTIONS ON CURATED 'BEST OF' PAGES (E.G. 'BEST DATE NIGHT RESTAURANTS IN [CITY]', 'TOP BRUNCH SPOTS IN [NEIGHBORHOOD]') — THESE ARE FREQUENTLY PULLED INTO AI ANSWERS

AI & Generative Search Visibility (continued)

- CHECK THAT GPTBOT, PERPLEXITYBOT, AND OTHER AI CRAWLERS ARE NOT BLOCKED IN YOUR ROBOTS.TXT FILE
- REGULARLY TEST HOW YOUR RESTAURANT APPEARS IN CHATGPT, PERPLEXITY, AND GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS BY SEARCHING RELEVANT LOCAL QUERIES
- BUILD A PRESENCE ON REDDIT — LOCAL SUBREDDITS (R/[CITY]FOOD, R/[CITY]) ARE HEAVILY INDEXED BY AI TOOLS AND OFTEN CITED IN RESTAURANT RECOMMENDATIONS
- MONITOR AND RESPOND TO MENTIONS ON AI-CITED PLATFORMS (REDDIT, QUORA, LOCAL FORUMS) WHERE PEOPLE ASK FOR RESTAURANT RECOMMENDATIONS IN YOUR AREA
- CREATE AN LLMS.TXT FILE HOSTED AT YOURDOMAIN.COM/LLMS.TXT — A PLAIN TEXT FILE WRITTEN IN MARKDOWN THAT GIVES AI TOOLS A CLEAN, STRUCTURED SUMMARY OF YOUR RESTAURANT
- OPTIONALLY CREATE AN LLMS-FULL.TXT WITH EXPANDED DETAIL — FULL MENU SECTIONS, CHEF BIO, FULL EVENT CALENDAR, AND PRESS MENTIONS — FOR AI TOOLS THAT INDEX DEEPER CONTENT

READY TO CRUSH IT?

IF YOU'VE CHECKED OFF THE ITEMS IN THIS GUIDE, YOUR RESTAURANT WEBSITE IS IN A STRONG POSITION.

REMEMBER: THE MOST SUCCESSFUL WEBSITES CONTINUE IMPROVING.

MONITORING PERFORMANCE, REFINING CONTENT, AND OPTIMIZING USER EXPERIENCE ALL CONTRIBUTE TO LONG-TERM SUCCESS.

EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES AND TOOLS AT:

[MEROKEEVENTURES.COM/TOOLS/](https://merokeeventures.com/tools/)



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