

THE U.S. RESTAURANT OUTLOOK

Three signals. A clearer next step.

Put published U.S. restaurant research into context, then use a short worksheet to plan the questions for your next business review.

\$1.55T

Projected U.S. restaurant and foodservice sales in 2026

Forecast | 2026 outlook, published February 11, 2026 | Source 1

1.3%

Projected inflation-adjusted industry sales growth in 2026

Forecast | 2026 outlook, published February 11, 2026 | Source 1

36%

Estimated increase in an average restaurant's total expenses, 2019-2026

Estimate | Analysis published July 8, 2026 | Source 2

THE NUMBER IS THE START, NOT THE DECISION.

Compare the research with your own service periods, invoices and team observations. A national forecast is not a forecast for your restaurant. Choose one question to investigate, assign an owner and set a review date.

An independent Taply editorial brief drawing on publicly available National Restaurant Association research. This is not a Taply survey or a reproduction of the Association's full report.

Forecasts are not final 2026 results. Source dates and links are on page 2. Public pages reviewed October 11, 2026.

Four questions. One useful action.

Bring the records. Write one observation and a follow-up for each area.

Review period: _____

Owner / review date: _____

01 Demand & service

Which service periods changed, and what might explain it?

Bring: Comparable dates, sales totals, check counts and notes on closures or events.

Observation / follow-up: _____

02 Menu & purchasing

Which items need a closer look before changing the menu?

Bring: Recent supplier invoices, recipe quantities, item availability and waste notes.

Observation / follow-up: _____

03 People & handoffs

Where does the team lose clarity during the shift?

Bring: Shift coverage, training questions and observations from the floor and kitchen.

Observation / follow-up: _____

04 The next visit

What made service easier or harder for guests this week?

Bring: Guest feedback, recurring order questions and checkout observations.

Observation / follow-up: _____

Use matching periods and consistent definitions. Keep taxes, tips, refunds and discounts identifiable when reviewing sales. Ask your accountant to confirm the basis of any financial comparison. These prompts are planning suggestions, not accounting advice or a claim that a particular Taply feature automates them.

SOURCES & CONTEXT

1. State of the Restaurant Industry 2026

National Restaurant Association | February 11, 2026

2. Elevated costs continue to pressure restaurant profitability

National Restaurant Association | July 8, 2026

Figures are selected from public source summaries, not independently reproduced by Taply. The paid report was not reviewed. The worksheet is original Taply editorial. No affiliation or endorsement is implied.

[Read the complete online brief and source notes](#)