
CONCEPT • COST • SERVICE

FOOD TRUCK GUIDE

Test the concept before the route.

Control food and labor cost.

Serve safely and consistently.

CONCEPT | PERMITS | MARGIN | SAFETY

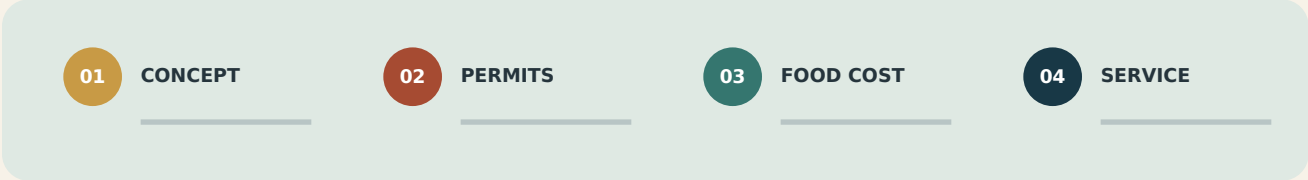
Veteran's Strategic Solutions LLC



START HERE

How to Use This Guide

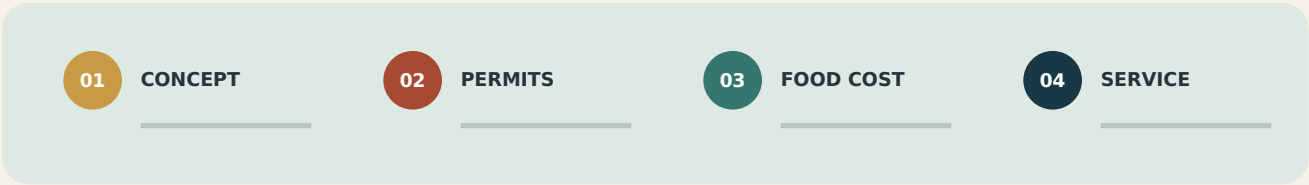
Read the core guide first. Then use the worksheets to test the concept, confirm licensing and inspections, plan the truck or trailer and kitchen, calculate menu and event pricing, document each service, invoice approved work, track sales and food cost, and control sanitation, fire, equipment, and operating risks.



PREP DISCIPLINE | A focused menu, repeatable station layout, and controlled portions protect speed and margin.

PIECE	USE
Core guide	Choose a differentiated concept, test one event, price the full mobile kitchen, and track food cost percentage every week.
Operating kit	Use the startup, budget, estimate, event authorization, invoice, tracker, and compliance pages for every service day and event.

A Note on the Source Flyer



The source flyer was written for one city and named local events and concept assumptions. Those local details do not transfer. Everything below is organized around testing the actual service area and choosing a concept that is not already covered.

BUSINESS LENS	CONTROL
Concept	Map cuisines, prices, service hours, and demand.
Cost control	Track food and labor percentages every week.
Service	Test one event before committing to a route.

The Bet

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Core assumption that must be true: There is room for another food truck in a market that may already have an active scene — and the honest read is that this is less about “is there room” and more about “which concept isn’t already covered.”

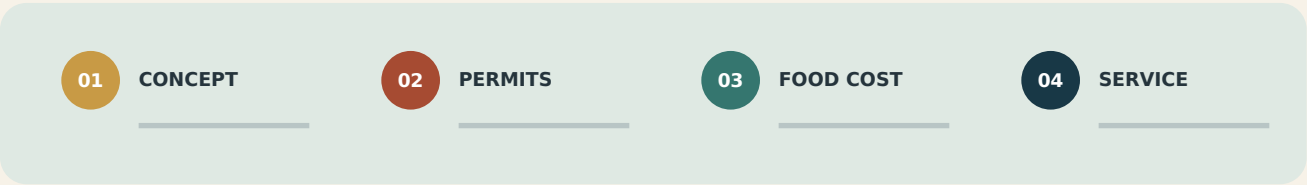
Fastest zero-budget way to test it: Look at what is already running. Map each active truck by cuisine, price point, service hours, event presence, and customer response. The gap is in what concept, not whether food trucks work at all.

Three biggest reasons this fails before you spend a dollar: 1. Competition may be real and well-established. A new truck needs a genuinely different concept, not a duplicate competing directly. 2. Equipment and permitting costs are real, not inflated on this flyer — \$60,000–\$180,000+ is a legitimate range for a properly equipped truck with commercial kitchen equipment, generator, refrigeration, and fire suppression. Don’t assume this number is padded the way some other flyers’ figures were. 3. Food safety and health permitting is non-negotiable and ongoing — ServSafe Manager Certification, health department permits, fire inspection, and sales tax registration all apply regardless of concept. Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.



SERVICE WINDOW | Clear ordering, handoff, and payment flow keeps the line moving and the customer experience consistent.

Who Pays, In Their Own Words

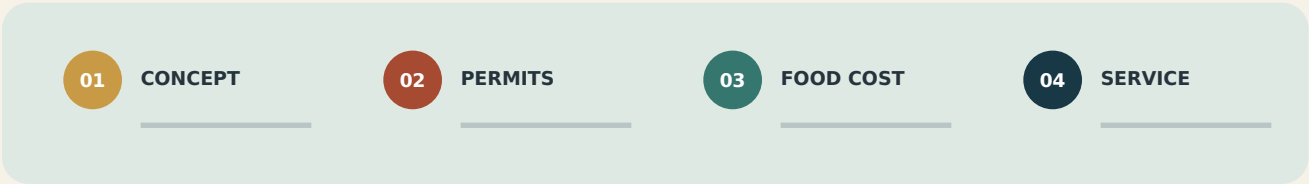


“I want something quick during my work shift that isn’t the same three trucks.” “We’re doing a private event and want food trucks, not a catering hall.” “I want breakfast options before work, not just lunch.”

That last statement points to a gap worth testing: whether current mobile food operators serve early-morning demand in the intended service area.

BUSINESS LENS	CONTROL
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The Smallest Version You Can Charge For



A narrow, focused menu on a trailer rather than a full truck — the flyer’s own Step 1 stresses “easy to prepare in a small space, low food cost, unique and in demand.” After mapping the existing scene, an early-morning/breakfast concept or a genuinely different cuisine not already represented may be the opening, not competing head-on with an established truck.

Path to your first paying customer: a single community or private event as the test run before committing to a daily rotation.

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Service	Test one event before committing to a route.

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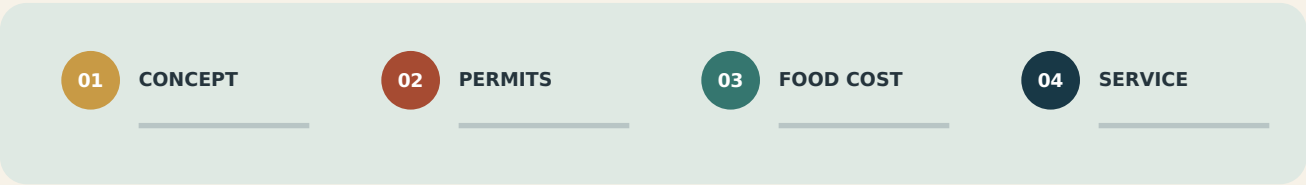
SERVICE

Menu pricing is entirely concept-dependent, but the flyer's guidance on cost control is worth keeping regardless of concept: target 25–35% food cost and 20–30% labor cost as the numbers to track weekly, not just at tax time.



SAFETY CHECK | Document temperature, sanitation, fire, equipment, and opening checks before service begins.

First 90 Days and the One Metric



Days 1-14: Pick a concept genuinely different from what is already running — not a duplicate of a category already served.

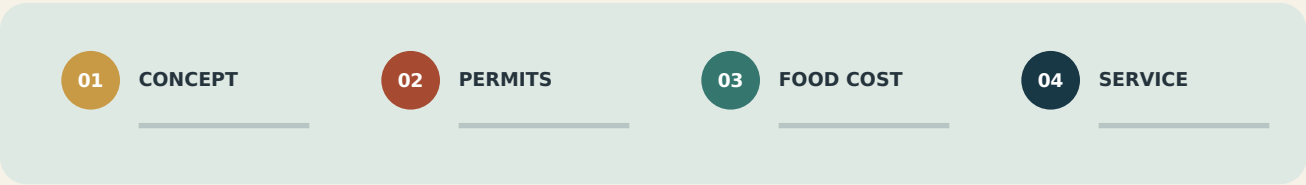
Days 15-45: Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.

Days 46-90: Run the concept at a single community or private event before committing to a daily rotation schedule.

The one metric that matters: food cost percentage tracked weekly from day one. A food truck that doesn't know this number in real time is flying blind regardless of how good the food is.

BUSINESS LENS	CONTROL
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Honest Assessment

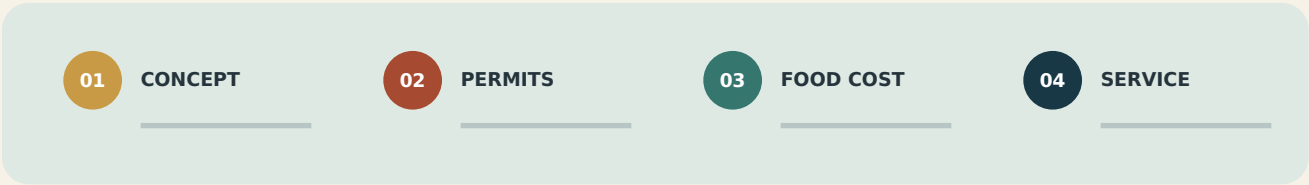


A service area with active food trucks and real event demand is a useful signal. The real work is not assuming the market exists; it is picking a concept that does not compete head-on with an established truck and confirming all permitting directly instead of trusting a flyer written for another place. Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.

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CORE REFERENCE

Startup Cost Reference



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Use these verified source ranges as planning references, then replace every estimate with written local quotes before committing funds.

Item	Est. Cost	Notes
Food truck (used)	\$40,000-\$120,000	A trailer conversion is typically cheaper than a used truck — worth pricing both
Kitchen equipment	\$5,000-\$20,000	
Permits & licenses	\$1,000-\$5,000	Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.
Insurance	\$2,000-\$6,000	
Initial inventory	\$2,000-\$5,000	
ServSafe Manager Certification	Low cost, online available	At least one person on the team needs this
Working capital	\$10,000-\$25,000	Covers the gap before revenue is predictable

Startup Checklist

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DONE	ACTION	OWNER DATE NOTES
☐	Inventory active local trucks by cuisine, price, schedule, venue, and customer response.	
☐	Define one focused concept and a short menu designed for a small kitchen.	
☐	Price a used truck and a trailer conversion before choosing the platform.	
☐	Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.	
☐	Confirm health, food-safety, fire, vehicle, commissary, wastewater, and event requirements [VERIFY].	
☐	Obtain insurance quotes for the vehicle, property, liability, workers, and events [VERIFY].	
☐	Complete ServSafe Manager Certification and all required food-handler credentials [VERIFY].	
☐	Cost every recipe and set portion, prep, labeling, holding, and waste controls.	
☐	Arrange suppliers, approved storage or commissary access, power, water, fuel, and waste handling [VERIFY].	
☐	Book one community or private event as the paid test.	
☐	Track food cost percentage and labor cost percentage every week.	

WORKSHEET 02

Equipment and Budget Worksheet

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MOBILE KITCHEN KIT | Build the operation around food-safe tools, measurement, labeling, records, and dependable power.

ITEM	NEEDED	ESTIMATE	ACTUAL	NOTES
Used food truck or trailer conversion				
Kitchen equipment				
Generator, power, propane, and fuel systems [VERIFY]				
Refrigeration, hot holding, sinks, water, and wastewater [VERIFY]				
Fire suppression and extinguishers [VERIFY]				
Permits, licenses, inspections, and certifications [VERIFY]				
Insurance [VERIFY]				
Initial food, beverage, packaging, and cleaning inventory				
Point-of-sale, communications, menu board, and signage				
Commissary, storage, parking, and event fees [VERIFY]				
Working capital and repair reserve				

BUDGET CONTROL

TOTAL ESTIMATE: _____ TOTAL ACTUAL: _____ CASH RESERVE: _____

Pricing and Estimate Template

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CLIENT	SERVICE LOCATION	ESTIMATE NUMBER	DATE

SERVICE OR INPUT	BASIS	AMOUNT
Menu service	Guest count and service window	
Minimum sales guarantee [VERIFY]	Event commitment	
Per-person package	Menu and quantity	
Truck or trailer service fee	Travel, setup, and breakdown	
Staffing	Crew and service hours	
Premium ingredients or add-ons	Approved selection	
Event, parking, or utility fees	Written pass-through	
Travel outside service area	Mileage or flat rate	
Sales tax [VERIFY]	Applicable treatment	
Total estimate		

TOTAL ESTIMATE	DEPOSIT OR AUTHORIZATION	VALID THROUGH

WORKSHEET 04

Event Service Authorization

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FIELD	AGREED DETAIL
Client, venue, event contact, and emergency contact	
Event date, arrival, setup, service, and departure times	
Expected guest count and service format	
Approved menu, portions, substitutions, and sold-out policy	
Dietary, allergen, cross-contact, and labeling instructions [VERIFY]	
Pricing method, minimum, deposits, fees, and payment terms	
Venue access, parking, queue, lighting, security, and noise limits	
Power, fuel, water, ice, wastewater, grease, trash, and restroom plan [VERIFY]	
Permits, inspections, fire controls, and venue approvals [VERIFY]	
Staffing, uniforms, handwashing, illness, and sanitation controls	
Weather, cancellation, refund, delay, and force-majeure terms [VERIFY]	
Sales, tax, gratuity, and point-of-sale responsibilities [VERIFY]	
Setup, teardown, cleaning, and damage responsibilities	
Insurance and certificate requirements [VERIFY]	
Client and operator acceptance and signatures	

Invoice Template

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BUSINESS	CLIENT	INVOICE NUMBER	DATE DUE

DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	RATE	AMOUNT
Menu or per-person service			
Minimum sales guarantee			
Truck or trailer service fee			
Staffing or extended service			
Premium ingredients or add-ons			
Travel or event fee			
Approved additional work			
Credits or adjustments			

SUMMARY	AMOUNT
Subtotal	
Tax [VERIFY]	
Credits / adjustments	
Total	
Balance due	

Job Log and Lead Tracker

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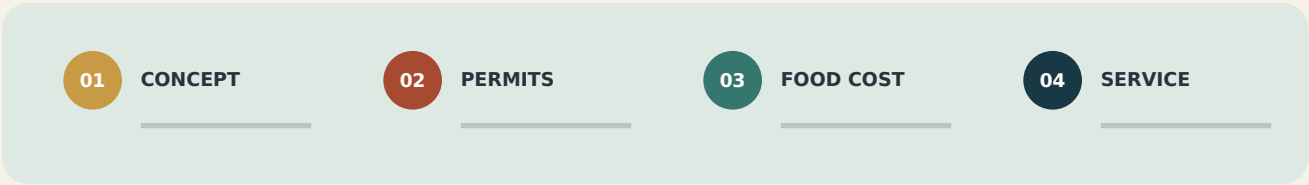
DATE	LEAD SOURCE	NEED OR SCOPE	QUOTE	STATUS NEXT STEP

DATE	EVENT / SITE	SALES	FOOD COST	LABOR	NOTES

ONE METRIC

FOOD COST %: _____ LABOR COST %: _____ SALES PER SERVICE HOUR: _____

Food Truck Compliance and Safety



Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.

CHECK	CONTROL	INITIALS NOTES
☐	Licensing, zoning, tax, health, mobile-unit, commissary, parking, and event requirements are confirmed [VERIFY].	
☐	ServSafe Manager Certification and all required food-handler credentials are current [VERIFY].	
☐	Food sources, receiving, storage, preparation, cooking, cooling, reheating, holding, and temperature logs meet requirements [VERIFY].	
☐	Handwashing, illness exclusion, sanitation, chemical, pest, allergen, cross-contact, and labeling controls are documented [VERIFY].	
☐	Fire suppression, extinguishers, hood, ventilation, propane, generator, electrical, fuel, and inspection controls are confirmed [VERIFY].	
☐	Freshwater, wastewater, grease, trash, ice, restroom, and cleaning arrangements are approved [VERIFY].	
☐	Vehicle, trailer, towing, tires, brakes, securement, parking, weather, and emergency procedures are documented [VERIFY].	
☐	Sales, tax, batch, supplier, inspection, training, incident, maintenance, and retention records are kept.	

STOP RULE

Do not serve until the operating approvals, food-safety controls, temperature records, fire and fuel systems, utilities, venue authorization, staffing, insurance, and emergency plan are confirmed.