**Pop-Up Restaurant Template**

**A. Core Concept & Brand Narrative**

* **Pop-Up Name:** [e.g., "The Midnight Noodle Co." or "Chef [Name]'s Secret Supper"]
* **Concept & Culinary Theme:**
  + \*(e.g., 90s Nostalgia Dinner Party, 10-Course Vegan Tasting, Underground Izakaya)\*
* **Mission & "Why Pop-Up":**
  + *(e.g., "To test a future brick-and-mortar concept," "To celebrate a seasonal ingredient," "To create an exclusive, one-of-a-kind dining experience.")*
* **Target Audience:**
  + *(e.g., Food Adventurers, Local Influencers, Fine Dining Enthusiasts, Followers of the Chef)*
* **Price Point & Model:**
  + *(e.g., $$$ - Prix Fixe Ticketed, $$ - A la Cart Pop-Up, $$$$ - Charity Gala)*
* **Unique Selling Proposition (USP):**
  + \*(The core of the pop-up. e.g., "A 5-course dinner served in a secret rooftop garden," "The first local showcase of a specific regional cuisine," "An immersive theatrical dining experience.")\*

**B. Venue Strategy & Negotiation**

**1. Venue Selection Criteria**

| **Venue Type** | **Pros** | **Cons** | **Key Considerations** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Existing Restaurant** (Dark Kitchen/Night) | Full kitchen, permits, seating | Limited to off-hours, may have rules | Negotiate a flat fee or percentage of sales. |
| **Unconventional Space** (Gallery, Loft, Studio) | Unique ambiance, high "wow" factor | May lack infrastructure (kitchen, HVAC) | Check zoning and health department rules for temporary events. |
| **Brewery/Distillery/Winery** | Built-in audience, liquor license | May have food truck partnerships already | Propose a collaborative menu pairing. |
| **Outdoor/Public Space** (Park, Rooftop) | Scenic, high demand | Weather-dependent, complex permits | Always have a solid weather contingency plan. |

* **Non-Negotiable Checklist:**
  + Health Department Compliance for temporary food service
  + Adequate Power (for cooking equipment)
  + Ventilation (or ability to bring it in)
  + Access to Water & Gray Water Disposal
  + Adequate Restrooms for guests
  + Liability Insurance requirements

**2. Venue Negotiation Guide**

* **Offer Value:** Propose a win-win (e.g., "We'll handle all marketing and bring our followers to your space on a slow night.").
* **Compensation Models:**
  + **Flat Fee:** You pay the venue $[Amount] for the night. You keep all revenue.
  + **Percentage of Sales:** You give the venue [e.g., 15-30%] of gross food & beverage sales.
  + **Hybrid Model:** Lower flat fee ($[Amount]) + smaller percentage ([e.g., 10%]).
* **Key Contract Clauses:**
  + **Term:** Clearly define dates/times for load-in, service, and breakdown.
  + **Liability & Insurance:** Specify who holds what insurance. You will likely need a one-day event policy.
  + **Cancellation Policy:** Terms for both parties.
  + **Profit Split:** Clearly state how and when the venue gets paid.

**C. Timeline for a Temporary Operation**

\*(Example for a 4-week pop-up series)\*

* **T-12 Weeks: Concept & Planning**
  + Finalize concept, menu, and budget.
  + Begin scouting and negotiating with venues.
* **T-8 Weeks: Venue & Legal**
  + Sign venue contract.
  + Secure one-day event insurance.
  + Apply for any necessary temporary food permits.
* **T-6 Weeks: Marketing & Pre-Sales**
  + Launch social media accounts and website/landing page.
  + Announce dates and release ticket/pre-sale link.
  + Begin influencer/PR outreach.
* **T-2 Weeks: Operations Finalization**
  + Finalize staff (hire if necessary).
  + Place final orders with food suppliers.
  + Confirm equipment rental order.
* **T-1 Week: The Final Push**
  + Final menu run-through and staff briefing.
  + Post daily "sneak peek" content on social media.
  + Send reminder email to ticket holders.
* **Pop-Up Week: Execution**
  + Load-in and setup.
  + **Execute Service.**
  + Breakdown and load-out.
* **T+1 Week: Post-Mortem & Follow-Up**
  + Send thank-you emails to guests and staff.
  + Analyze financial and customer feedback.
  + Plan next steps (new series? brick-and-mortar?).

**D. Equipment Sourcing: Rent vs. Buy Analysis**

| Equipment | Rent (Good for...) | Buy (Good for...) | Decision Matrix |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Major Cooking** (Range, Oven) | One-off events; no storage | Long pop-up series; future use | **Rent if:** Single event. **Buy if:** 10+ events planned. |
| **Refrigeration** (Low-Boy, Freezer) | Any event without on-site units | A long-term pop-up project | Almost always **Rent** for convenience. |
| **Smallwares** (Pans, Utensils) | Filling gaps in your kit | Building a permanent kit | **Buy** basics, **rent** specialty items. |
| **Service Items** (Plates, Glassware) | Themed events; no dishwasher | Consistent branding; many events | **Rent** for elegance and ease. **Buy** compostable for casual. |
| **POS System** | Any event | A long series or permanent move | **Rent/Use Mobile POS** (Square, Toast Go). |

* **Total Rental Cost Estimate:** $[Amount] per event.
* **Total Purchase Cost Estimate:** $[Amount] (one-time).

**E. Social Media & Marketing Strategy**

**1. Phased Marketing Rollout**

* **Phase 1: The Tease (T-6 Weeks)**
  + **Action:** Create Instagram/TikTok account. Post cryptic, high-quality visuals (ingredients, mood boards, chef prepping) without revealing the full concept.
  + **Goal:** Build curiosity and initial followers.
* **Phase 2: The Reveal (T-4 Weeks)**
  + **Action:** Announce the pop-up name, dates, and venue. Launch a simple landing page for an email list.
  + **Goal:** Drive email sign-ups and concrete interest.
* **Phase 3: The Launch (T-2 Weeks)**
  + **Action:** Release the menu and open ticket sales/registrations. Collaborate with local food influencers for "takeovers" or giveaways.
  + **Goal:** Sell out the event.
* **Phase 4: The Hype (T-1 Week)**
  + **Action:** Post "behind-the-scenes" stories of prep, introduce the team, share countdowns.
  + **Goal:** Maintain excitement and minimize no-shows.
* **Phase 5: The Experience (Event Week)**
  + **Action:** Encourage guests to share their experience with a dedicated hashtag (e.g., #MidnightNoodleCo). Reshare user-generated content.
  + **Goal:** Create social proof and FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) for the next event.

**F. Path to Permanence Planning**

**1. Success Metrics for a Permanent Move**

* **Financial Viability:**
  + Consistent sell-out of [e.g., 80%] of seats across [e.g., 10+] events.
  + Average customer spend of >$[Amount].
  + Positive net profit after all costs.
* **Customer Demand:**
  + Waitlist consistently [e.g., 2x] the number of available seats.
  + Strong, positive reviews on social media and Google.
  + Growing, engaged email list (>[e.g., 1,000] subscribers).
* **Operational Execution:**
  + Smooth service with minimal operational hiccups.
  + Proven, reliable team in place.
  + Streamlined supply chain and vendor relationships.

**2. Steps to Brick-and-Mortar**

* **Validate Concept:** Use pop-up revenue and customer data to secure investors or loans.
* **Develop Business Plan:** Create a full plan based on pop-up learnings (use the Full-Service Restaurant Template).
* **Secure Funding:** Use pop-up success stories (media clips, financials) in your pitch.
* **Location Scouting:** Leverage the community you built to find the perfect permanent home.

**G. Critical Path to Pop-Up Launch**

* **Phase 1: The Big Idea** (Complete this template)
* **Phase 2: Venue & Legal**
  + Secure Venue & Sign Contract
  + Obtain Temporary Food Permit & Event Insurance
* **Phase 3: Financials & Marketing**
  + Create Detailed Budget & Set Ticket Prices
  + Build Social Media Presence & Launch Marketing Phases
  + Open Ticket Sales/Reservations
* **Phase 4: Operations & Sourcing**
  + Finalize Menu & Source Suppliers
  + Hire & Brief Staff (Chefs, Servers)
  + Place Equipment Rental Order
* **Phase 5: Execution**
  + Conduct Soft Opening for Friends/Media
  + Execute the Pop-Up Event(s)
  + Gather Feedback & Analyze Performance