



# Countdown to Valentine's Day

Tips to keep you on track



Some restaurants may be feeling a bit rusty on how to make the most of Valentine's Day this year—use these tips to brainstorm ideas, refine your strategy, and stay on track for a successful Valentine's Day.

## More than a month out

- Ask your staff if they have any feedback from past years
- Tweak your book to accommodate more two-tops
- Create an Experience such as a set menu or wine pairing to bring in revenue upfront and minimise no shows
- Offer your special menu all weekend—this year Valentine's Day falls on a Monday
- Decide if you'll offer your special menu to-go, and make plans for Valentine's Day packaging
- Test any new dishes
- Hype up your Valentine's Day offerings across all your channels
- Reach out to valuable guests from Valentine's Days in the past and invite them back



## One month out

- Share the menu on social media and encourage guests to book tables before they're gone
- Consider requiring a credit card deposit to cut down on no-shows
- Let people know if you have outdoor dining options
- Update your website and online profiles to feature your Valentine's Day menu
- Team up with local businesses (florists, wineries) to create buzz and a special evening

## Two weeks out

- Put together a playlist to match the mood you want to create
- Design the decor with colourful flourishes, flowers, hearts, or other Instagram-friendly touches
- Have a game plan for proposal requests
- Set up a reservation waitlist
- Spread the word if your set menu can be ordered for dine-in and/or to take home

## One week out

- Watch the book for opportunities to squeeze in extra parties
- Confirm reservations via SMS, email and direct messaging
- Remind guests about anything you're doing to keep everyone safer, including social distancing or contactless payment options
- Make sure your team is up to speed on the menu and plan
- Train the team on takeaway and deliveries

## Day of

- Print new menus or generate QR codes
- Double-check any special requests (prepaid items, proposals) so they're good to go
- Sit down at a table to see how the room feels from a guest's perspective
- Set the tone: encourage a positive vibe and energise your staff for a busy night
- Recognise VIPs with a small gift from the kitchen, if possible
- Talk to guests, and ask if it's their first time dining with you

## After Valentine's Day

- Assess how things went (covers, revenue, average turn times)
- Ask your team how the night went for them
- Record what went well and what you can improve for next year
- Engage with guests by responding to reviews and sending follow-up emails

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