

In-Room Dining

The Hot and Cold Standard

Five steps that keep hot food hot and cold food cold from the pass to the room.
Most temperature complaints begin in the minutes between the pass and the door.

Who	When	You need
In-room dining runners, with the chef at the pass	Every hot or cold dish that leaves the kitchen for a room	Hot box or heated trolley, metal covers, ice tray, probe thermometer
Measured by Hot box at heat before service opens · Trolley laid before the dish is called · Leaves the pass within 2 minutes		

1 Heat the box

Switch the hot box on 30 minutes before each service and check it with the probe; our target is 70°C inside. Plates for hot dishes wait in the plate warmer, plates for cold dishes in the fridge.

"Hot box 2 · 72°C · 18:30 · checked by Aisha"

Common mistake Switching the hot box on when the first order comes in. It reaches heat just as the dinner rush ends.

2 Lay the trolley first

Lay the trolley before the food is ready: cloth, cutlery, glasses, condiments, napkins and bill folder. When the chef calls the dish, the only things left are to cover it and go.

"412 is laid and waiting at the pass, chef. Ready when you are."

Common mistake Folding napkins while the plates wait under the lamp. Two minutes of laying costs the dish its heat.

3 Separate hot and cold

Hot dishes go under a metal cover into the hot box. Salads, desserts and cold drinks go on the top shelf, away from it. Ice cream and sorbet go on last, in a chilled bowl set on ice.

"Fillet and fries in the box, Caesar on top, sorbet on ice, last on."

Common mistake Standing the salad next to the hot box for the trip. It arrives warm and limp beside fries that are only lukewarm.

4 Go straight up

Leave the pass within 2 minutes of the chef calling the order and take the service lift straight to the floor. Do not wait for a second order or stop at the station on the way.

"Going up to 412 now. Back in ten for 505."

Common mistake Waiting a few minutes for a second order so you can take both. The first guest pays for the saving in cold food.

5 Replace, never reheat

If a guest says a dish is cold, offer a fresh one from the kitchen with a clock time; never bring back a reheated plate. Tell the chef which dish it was and how long it travelled.

"I'm sorry, Mr Okafor. A fresh one will be with you at 21:05. May I take this one away?"

Common mistake Warming the plate at the floor station and bringing it back. The guest can tell, and the fries cannot recover.

What Travels Where

Each dish has one right place on the trolley and one sign that it arrived as the chef sent it. Check the sign when the cover comes off.

The dish	How it travels	Arrives with
Steak, fish, pasta	Hot box, metal cover, warm plate	Steam when the cover lifts
Fries and fried food	Hot box, cover vented, no film	A crisp edge, not a soft one
Soup	Hot box, lidded tureen, warm bowl	Steam when it is poured
Salads and cold starters	Top shelf, chilled plate	Firm leaves, dressing apart
Ice cream and sorbet	Chilled bowl on ice, last on	A scoop that holds its shape
Tea and coffee	Warmed pot, warmed cups	Steam as it is poured
Juice and milk	Chilled jug, on ice	A jug cold to the touch

How to use this with your team

Read one row a day at the pre-service briefing. In the first week the chef lifts one cover at the pass each service and asks the runner where that dish travels. The supervisor adds rows for your own menu.

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