Back of House (BOH) Workflow in a Restaurant

# 1. Receiving and Storing Inventory

Receiving Goods: The BOH starts with the receiving of goods, including fresh produce, meats, seafood, dry goods, and beverages. The staff checks the quality, quantity, and condition of the items against the order sheets and invoices.
Storage: After inspection, items are stored properly—perishables are refrigerated or frozen, dry goods are stored in the pantry, and cleaning supplies and other items are placed in their designated areas. Proper labeling and rotating stock (first-in, first-out method) are critical to ensure food safety and minimize waste.

# 2. Preparation (Prepping)

Mise en Place: This French term, meaning 'everything in its place,' refers to the preparation of ingredients and tools needed for service. This includes chopping vegetables, marinating meats, preparing sauces, and setting up cooking stations. Each station (grill, fry, sauté, etc.) is stocked with the necessary ingredients and equipment.
Batch Cooking: For high-demand items, batch cooking may be done during prep to ensure faster service during peak times. For example, large quantities of soup or sauces may be made in advance.

# 3. Order Processing

Order Receipt: Orders come into the kitchen via tickets printed from the Point of Sale (POS) system or directly through a kitchen display system (KDS). These orders are prioritized based on timing and cooking complexity.
Station Assignment: The orders are distributed across various stations (e.g., grill, sauté, fryer, salad) depending on the dish components. The kitchen staff at each station starts working on their part of the dish simultaneously.

# 4. Cooking and Plating

Cooking: Each cook at their respective station prepares their portion of the dish. Timing is crucial to ensure that all components of a dish are ready at the same time. Coordination between stations is key to delivering a complete dish together.
Plating: Once all components are cooked, they are brought together and plated according to the restaurant’s standards. Presentation is important, and the dish is often checked by the head chef or kitchen manager before it goes out to ensure quality.

# 5. Quality Control

Final Check: The head chef or expeditor (expo) often performs a final check to ensure the dish meets quality and presentation standards before it is sent out to the FOH. This includes checking portion sizes, temperature, and overall appearance.
Special Requests: Any special requests or modifications (e.g., dietary restrictions) are double-checked at this stage to ensure accuracy.

# 6. Coordination with FOH

Communication: The BOH staff communicates constantly with the FOH to ensure that dishes are prepared in the correct order and timing. If there are any delays or issues, the FOH is notified immediately so they can manage the guest experience.
Order Pickup: Once the dish is ready, it is placed in the pass or window for the servers or food runners to pick up and deliver to the table. Proper labeling and order sequencing are essential to ensure the correct dish goes to the right table.

# 7. Cleaning and Maintenance

Ongoing Cleaning: Throughout the shift, BOH staff are responsible for keeping their stations clean and organized. This includes wiping down surfaces, washing hands, and sanitizing equipment to prevent cross-contamination.
End-of-Shift Cleaning: At the end of the shift, a more thorough cleaning is done. This involves cleaning all equipment, floors, and surfaces, as well as properly storing any leftover ingredients and preparing the kitchen for the next day’s service.

# 8. Waste Management

Minimizing Waste: Throughout the day, the BOH staff works to minimize food waste by using trimmings in stocks or sauces and by careful portioning. Waste is tracked, and steps are taken to reduce it, such as refining prep methods or adjusting orders.
Disposal: Any waste that cannot be repurposed is disposed of according to local health and safety regulations. Composting or recycling programs may also be in place to reduce the restaurant's environmental impact.

# 9. Inventory Management

Stock Checks: Regular inventory checks are conducted to ensure that supplies are sufficient for upcoming services. Inventory is tracked and recorded, and reordering is done as needed to maintain stock levels.
Forecasting: Based on past sales data, the kitchen manager forecasts future inventory needs to avoid over-ordering or running out of key ingredients.

# 10. Team Coordination and Communication

Shift Meetings: Pre-shift meetings (or 'line-ups') are held to discuss the day’s menu, any special items, anticipated busy times, and any issues from previous shifts. This ensures that all team members are on the same page.
Problem Solving: Throughout the shift, the BOH staff must be adaptable and ready to solve problems as they arise, whether it’s a missing ingredient, equipment failure, or a sudden influx of orders.

# 11. Closing and Reporting

End-of-Day Reporting: At the end of the day, the kitchen manager or head chef reviews the day’s performance, including sales, inventory use, and any incidents. This data is used to make adjustments for future services.
Preparation for Next Day: The BOH staff ensures that everything is set up and ready for the next day’s service, which includes finalizing prep, placing orders, and setting up stations.