DAY

3

KNOWLEDGE

Guiding the Menu · Entrees · Quality Checks

Goal: Bring Knowledge to life at real tables. Earn the right to guide the menu: starters, entrees, sourcing. At Leela's, preparation is what turns a server into a guide.

"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."

B E N J A M I N F R A N K L I N

This is where service becomes guidance. Your knowledge is your confidence.

OWN THE MOMENT — DAY 3: KNOWLEDGE

"You cannot fake confidence at the table. You have to earn it through preparation."

Study the menu. Know the sourcing story. Know the cocktails. A guest asks about an ingredient, a dish, and you answer without hesitation. That knowledge is what separates a server from a guide. Do the hard work. It shows every time.

D A Y 3 C H E C K L I S T

HG PREMIUM VODKA — KNOW THIS STORY

HG Premium Vodka is our exclusive, Texas-made vodka, poured across all UNCO concepts. Gluten-free, corn-based, six-times distilled, designed to be exceptionally smooth.

The Origin Story: The HG Mule came first. We reimagined the Moscow Mule using kombucha instead of ginger beer, lighter and cleaner. That cocktail set the standard. Thirteen years later, HG Premium Vodka was built to match it. We didn't put a house vodka on the menu to save money. We put it here to raise the standard. Every vodka drink starts at a higher level without the guest having to ask or upgrade.

Well Spirits

VODKA	GIN	TEQUILA	BOURBON	RUM
HG Premium Vodka	**New Amsterdam**	**Pueblo Viejo**	**Quality House**	**Cruzan**
Texas-made, 6x distilled, gluten-free, corn-based	Crisp, citrus-forward London Dry style	Authentic Mexican blanco — clean and bright	Approachable, caramel-forward American bourbon	Light, clean Caribbean rum

Before Service

- ☐ Attire and grooming standards reviewed and approved
- ☐ Clock In

Tests

- ☐ Grazing
- ☐ Sparkling Cocktails
- ☐ Technique
- ☐ Infusions & Batch Program
- ☐ Act 1: Start Strong
- ☐ Pivot Point

Score:_____(must be 90% or above to pass)

- ☐ Roleplay Act One: Start Strong with your trainer – get ready to greet guests.

Own the Moment — Day 3 Conversation

- ☐ What does it feel like to sit at a table and have a server who truly knows the menu versus one who is guessing?
- ☐ What did you study last night? Can you thoughtfully guide the guest through three dishes right now without looking?

Prime Time

- ☐ Attend Shift Meeting
- ☐ **Review with your trainer: Steps of Service · Act Two: Main Act**
  - ▫ Guide through menu
  - ▫ Suggest next round
  - ▫ Deliver entrees
  - ▫ Quality check by name
  - ▫ Final prebus
- ☐ Discuss our process for refires or recooks. Refer to the Road to Success 1 pager.

Greet your trainer's first 3 Tables — Act 1: Start Strong

- ☐ Greet with confidence and drop napkins/coasters — accessible, present, zero hesitation
- ☐ First round sent as the top priority — no delay
- ☐ Offer starter by name with genuine, sourcing-confident recommendation
- ☐ Maintain eye contact if using handheld

During Shift Observations

- ☐ Complete all 2 bite/2 minute checks — no table left behind
- ☐ Run food and drinks — 360s, guest request
- ☐ Observe trainer executing Main Act

Practice (after successfully completing Act 1)

- ☐ Spend 2 hours on the well with trainer supervision building all menu listed cocktails
- ☐ Review and discuss UNCO standards for building classic cocktails

After Service —

- ☐ Roleplay Act Two: Main Act with 3 servers/bartenders — build comfort on the floor
- ☐ Complete Sidework & Server Checkout with trainer/server
- ☐ Food & Beverage Focus:
  Discuss Greens & Signature Cocktails
  Taste 2 Greens & 2 Signature Cocktails
- ☐ Log Tasting Notes

→ **DISCUSS · THIS DAY'S 1-PAGERS:** **Act Two: The Main Act · Allergen Protocol · Guide with Love · Road To Success**

OTM Debrief — Knowledge

"Where did your knowledge show up as confidence — and where did it let you down?"

- ◻ For Yourself: Were there moments your menu knowledge gave you authority at the table? Where did uncertainty show?
- ◻ For the Guest: When guests had questions, did your knowledge make them feel like they were in expert hands?
- ◻ For the Team: Did your preparation today make it easier for your teammates, or did gaps in knowledge create extra work for others?

Strengths:

_____

_____

Opportunities:

_____

_____

_____	_____	_____
Trainer	Trainee	Captain / GM

NEXT SHIFT — Prep for test: Greens & Signature Cocktails Start Reviewing: Signature Pizzas & Fresh and Light Cocktails (NAs)

ACT TWO The Main Act

05. Guide through the menu

You are a guide, not an order taker, and the difference shows in how you approach the table. Use sourcing stories and genuine recommendations to move guests toward a decision they feel good about. Know the menu cold before you arrive.

Take the order by seat number and let the conversation feel natural throughout. Parroting is the standard: reflect the guest's requests back to them, ask any necessary follow-up questions, and confirm every detail before you leave the table. Do not leave uncertain about anything.

Write the order on the server pad and ring at the terminal or handheld away from the table.

06. Suggest the next round

Before entrees arrive, offer the next beverage by name and keep drinks moving throughout the meal. If cocktails are running low, make a specific suggestion rather than a general offer, and consider transitioning to a bottle of wine with dinner if the moment calls for it.

Note on the server pad and ring away from the table. Frame the table before entrees drop.

07. Deliver entrees 10-14 minutes

Run food with urgency and always with full hands. Entrees are placed silently and confidently in front of the guest without announcing the item, because the table is already framed and food should land clean without any rearranging required.

08. Quality check by name 2 min/2bites

Return to the table at two minutes or two bites, whichever comes first, and check in by name and by dish rather than with a generic "how is everything?" Ask something specific: "How are you enjoying the [dish name]?" or "Can I get you anything else?" Any mistake or remake is handled immediately and the MOD is notified.

Log any adjustments on the server pad and ring corrections away from the table.

09. Final prebus

As the table winds down, offer to package anything remaining to go and remove all finished plates and empty glassware. Nothing should be left on the table that does not belong there, and the surface should be clean and reset before the dessert conversation begins.

allergen protocol

We take every allergy seriously. If a guest has an allergy, we assume it is life-threatening and treat it that way. Our recipes are complex and can contain ingredients that never show on the plate. This protocol runs the same way every time, with zero exceptions.

If a guest is in distress, call 911 immediately.

the protocol

01 KNOW THE MENU. GUIDE THE GUEST.

Know the menu well enough to guide a guest with an allergy to a great choice with confidence. Unsure whether an item contains the allergen? Tell the guest you will confirm with a manager before ordering.

02 MANAGER BEFORE ANYTHING RINGS

Every allergy ticket gets a manager before it enters the system. No exceptions.

03 RING WITH THE ALLERGY MODIFIER

Use the Allergy Modifier button, communicate the item to Expo, and confirm the kitchen is aware.

04 A MANAGER RUNS THE DISH. EVERY TIME.

When the item comes up in the window, a manager runs it to the table and places it in front of the correct guest.

05 SIGNS OF A REACTION: STOP AND GET A MANAGER

Stop what you are doing and get a manager immediately. If the guest is in distress, call 911 first.

the nine leading allergens

These account for the vast majority of serious reactions. Guests may present allergies beyond this list. Every allergy gets the same care.

Gluten / Celiac
Wheat, couscous, farro, barley, oats, rye, soy sauce

Dairy / Lactose
Butter, cheese, cream, milk, yogurt, whey

Egg
Eggs, mayonnaise, meringue, baked goods, pasta

Soy
Edamame, miso, soy milk, tofu, tempeh, TVP

Sesame
Sesame oil, sesame seeds, tahini

Peanut
Peanut extracts, syrups, pastes, oils, milks

Tree Nut
Almonds, cashews, pecans, walnuts, plus nut extracts, oils, milks

Fish
Finned fish only: salmon, tuna, anchovies, redfish

Shellfish
Shrimp, crab, lobster, squid, oysters, scallops

guide with love

Guests do not want the menu read to them. They want to be guided by someone who is in love with what they are offering. A real recommendation is not selling, it is love for the dish. “Everything's good here” is the best way to show you couldn’t care less.

Recommend what you love, be excited to share.

the fundamentals

01 HAVE A FAVORITE, MEAN IT

Own three answers before every shift: favorite starter, favorite entree, and the thing they cannot get anywhere else. Conviction is built in the tasting, not performed at the table.

02 ASK ONE QUESTION FIRST

Hungry or grazing? Adventurous or comfort? Celebrating or refueling? The right recommendation starts with their answer, not your script.

03 SELL THE STORY, NOT THE PRICE

The sourcing, the why, the way it is made. People buy stories and remember them. Specifics beat superlatives every single time.

04 HONESTY SELLS FOREVER

Steer a guest away from a dish that is wrong for them, find what you know they will love and guide them with grace. Your honest answer shows you care.

in the shop

- ✓ Speak the brand's language. Real words, specific claims, zero fluff.
- ✓ Offer the add-on as care, not commerce. I see the table hasn’t ordered the brussels, trust me, you'll love them.
- ✓ A second round suggested before the glass is empty is service. After it's empty, it's sales.
- ✓ Never oversell a first-timer. The goal of visit one is visit two.
- ✓ Conviction is quiet. One confident sentence beats three hedges and a maybe.

otm self-reflection

FOR YOURSELF *Could you defend your three favorites tonight from actual tasting, or were you reciting?*

FOR THE GUEST *Which table trusted you more after your recommendation? How do you know?*

FOR THE TEAM *What did you learn tonight, a taste, a story, a pairing, that sharpens tomorrow's guidance?*

road to success

Things go wrong. A plate comes out cold, a reservation gets lost, a guest waits too long. You have two options in that moment, you can hide from it, or you can own it. How we recover is the difference between frustration and lifelong impact. The mistake doesn't define us. What we do next does.

A mistake well handled.

the five a's

01 AWARENESS

The guest should never be the one to tell us something went wrong. See it first... read the table, feel the energy, catch it before it grows.

02 ACKNOWLEDGE

Name it out loud to the guest. No alibis, no blaming the kitchen, no hiding. "Your entree came out wrong, that's on us" builds more trust than pretending it never happened.

03 APOLOGIZE

Say the real words. "I'm so sorry, our mistake". Sincere and direct, with no excuse attached. An apology with a "but" in it isn't an apology.

04 ACT

Say what you're going to do, then do it fast. Make the fix the priority and follow through before they have to ask again. Sense of urgency tells the guest they matter.

05 ADD GENEROSITY

Write the great last chapter. Do something extra to thank them for their patience. Give more than the moment requires... and turn the problem into the reason they come back.

the story

In 1994, Danny Meyer... the restaurateur behind Union Square Cafe... was still beating himself up over a mistake his team had made.

He shared it with Stanley Marcus, the man whose family built Neiman Marcus right here in Dallas back in 1907. Marcus didn't flinch.

He told Meyer a line that reframed the whole game: the road to success is paved with mistakes well handled.

The lesson stuck. A mistake you own and fix can earn more loyalty than a flawless night ever could... because the guest remembers how you made it right.

That's why we don't fear the mistake. We own the recovery. The Five A's are how we do it, every time, on every shift.

otm self-reflection

FOR YOURSELF *Think of the last mistake you owned with a guest. Which of the Five A's did you skip... and what would you do differently next time?*

FOR THE GUEST *Did anyone leave tonight still holding a problem we never made right... or did we write them a great last chapter?*

FOR THE TEAM *Where did we catch a mistake early and recover as a team... and where did one slip because nobody owned it?*

DAY 3 DISCUSSION · GUEST OBSESSED · BE BETTER