

TOGETHER HOSPITALITY CHICAGO

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR AI IN RESTAURANTS AND DO'S & DON'T'S

1. Leverage AI Through Your POS & Ordering Systems

- Toast, SpotOn, Square, Clover → Many modern POS platforms already include AI-driven reporting and forecasting tools.
- Tip: Set aside time each week to review AI-driven reports in your POS dashboard.

2. Enhance Reservations & Guest Management

- Tock, OpenTable, Resy → Already collect massive amounts of guest data. AI can help with personalization and demand shaping
- Tip: Train staff to add consistent notes to guest profiles. The AI will do more with the data you give it—leading to better upsell and repeat business opportunities.

3. AI-Powered Marketing with Built-In Tools

- Tip: Start with one automated campaign (e.g., “Guests who haven’t dined in 30 days”) and let the system’s AI personalize offers.

4. Menu Optimization

- AI-integrated menu engineering tools (often built into POS like Toast or third-party add-ons) analyze sales velocity, margins, and guest sentiment.
- Tip: Test one AI-driven suggestion (like renaming a dish or moving high-margin items to menu “hot spots”) and measure impact.

5. Labor & Scheduling Efficiency

- 7shifts, Harri, and Toast Scheduling use AI to optimize shifts.
- Tip: Run AI schedules alongside your “gut feel” schedule for a few weeks—compare labor costs and service levels.

6. Guest Feedback & Sentiment Tracking

- Yelp for Business, Google Business Manager, and AI-enabled survey tools (like Ovation or Tattle) can use AI to analyze reviews at scale.
- Tip: Dedicate 15 minutes each week to review AI-summarized guest feedback. Share the top 2–3 takeaways with staff at pre-shift meetings.

✓ DO Use AI For

- Operations & Efficiency: forecasting labor, managing schedules, reducing waste, inventory
- Guest Insights & Marketing: analyzing reviews, segmenting customer lists, automating re-engagement emails
- Reservations & POS Systems: dynamic table management, AI-driven upsells, demand-based pricing
- Menu Optimization: identifying high-margin dishes, predicting demand, suggesting seasonal rotations
- Hiring Support: resume screening, scheduling interviews, improving applicant flow

✗ DON'T Use AI For

- Hospitality & Human Touch: greetings, table service, empathy, creating a warm experience
- Creative Culinary Decisions: recipe development, plating artistry, cultural storytelling
- Conflict Resolution: guest complaints or recovery moments (requires real human listening)
- Brand Voice & Identity: mission, heritage, storytelling
- Taste & Sensory Judgment: seasoning, flavor balance, food presentation quality
- Hiring for Culture Fit: personality, team chemistry, emotional intelligence

