



Optimal Times Within a 12-Hour Shift to Offer Add-Ons

Purpose and Use

This handout helps restaurant and quick-service teams understand when to suggest add-ons during a full operating day. Guest flow, traffic peaks, and dining habits vary by hour, so timing an offer at the right moment can lift check size without interrupting speed or service rhythm.

Use this in team training or daily stand-ups to reinforce awareness of guest patterns across breakfast, lunch, and dinner periods.



Optimal Add-On Offering Times in a 12-Hour Shift

1. Breakfast Peak (6:30 AM – 9:30 AM)

- Guests are most open to coffee refills, breakfast sandwiches, or small sides like fruit cups.
- Make the suggestion immediately after the main item is ordered and before payment.
- Focus on quick phrases that fit the pace of the morning rush.

2. Mid-Morning Lull (9:30 AM – 11:00 AM)

- Traffic slows, giving staff time to personalize interactions.
- Suggest snack-size bakery items, bottled beverages, or mid-morning treats.
- Friendly conversation works well here since lines are shorter.

3. Lunch Rush (11:00 AM – 1:30 PM)

- Highest traffic window; efficiency matters most.
- Use short, confident phrasing to suggest combos, side salads, or premium drinks.
- Keep it under five seconds to protect drive-thru speed.



4. Afternoon Slowdown (1:30 PM – 3:30 PM)

- Volume dips again, opening room for casual upselling.
- Offer desserts, smoothies, or snack packs.
- Staff can use this slower time to practice conversational engagement.

5. Dinner Peak (4:00 PM – 7:00 PM)

- Guests look for complete meals; emphasize value bundles and comfort sides.
- Suggest entrées with premium toppings or shareable starters early.
- Offer desserts or beverages again before final payment.

6. Evening Close (7:00 PM – 9:00 PM)

- Lower traffic allows for relaxed conversation.
- Recommend comfort-food sides, late-night snacks, or limited-time bundles.
- Keep tone friendly and authentic to end the visit on a positive note.

Operational Insights

- Align upsell timing with real-time traffic data whenever possible.
- Peak hours call for concise prompts; slower periods allow personalization.
- Consistency across shifts helps guests perceive upselling as thoughtful service, not routine sales.

Key Takeaway

Upselling succeeds when it matches the rhythm of guest behavior.

Recognizing when customers are most receptive, whether it's a quick coffee run or a full dinner order, turns timing into a competitive advantage that grows revenue and improves guest satisfaction.