# 5 Common Kitchen Mistakes (and How to Avoid Them)

## Introduction

A successful kitchen is about more than taste and presentation. Behind every dish lies a world of organization, cost control, hygiene, stock management, and teamwork. In this mini-book, you’ll discover the five most common mistakes in professional kitchens – and how to avoid them. This way, you gain control, reduce waste, and delight your guests with consistent quality.

## 1. Poor Kitchen Organization

Leadership styles in the kitchen  
- Coaching – Guide and help your team find solutions.  
- Directive – Clear instructions followed immediately.  
- Participative – Involve the team in decisions.  
- Vision-driven – Inspire with the bigger picture.  
  
During mise-en-place, coaching works best; during a busy service, directive leadership prevents chaos.  
  
Common mistakes  
- Too little mise-en-place.  
- No clear task division per station.  
  
Practical tip  
Create a MEP checklist for every new menu and update it after service.

## 2. Not Calculating Dishes Properly

Common mistakes in cost control  
- Oversized menus.  
- Pricing without a calculation sheet.  
- No seasonal changeover.  
- Over-portioning top sellers.  
- Accepting supplier prices without negotiation.  
  
Step by step: cost control  
1. Analyze POS data.  
2. Fix or drop sleepers.  
3. Build calc sheets.  
4. Negotiate.  
5. Spot-check portions.  
6. Train the team.

## 3. Poor Food Hygiene

Check fridge/freezer temperatures multiple times a day; use extra thermometers and an infrared thermometer for ingredients.  
  
Common mistakes  
- Storing raw with prepared foods.  
- Raw meat above ready-to-eat items.  
  
Rule 1: When in doubt, don’t use it.

## 4. Poor Stock Management

Storerooms and shelves accumulate crumbs and clutter; FIFO is often ignored.  
  
The real risk: a mouse infestation  
Female fertile at 6 weeks; 10–12 litters/year; 6–12 pups/litter; pups fertile again at 6 weeks. A pair can lead to thousands within a year.  
  
Practical steps  
- Keep areas clean.  
- Weekly date checks.  
- FIFO & stock lists.  
- Monthly cleaning.  
- Report issues immediately.

## 5. Insufficient Staff Training

First impressions matter  
Share something personal, listen to backgrounds.  
  
Common mistakes  
- Only chasing numbers.  
- Unclear roles.  
- Hiring only for experience.  
- Public criticism.  
- No recognition.  
  
Step by step: build a strong team  
1. Invest time.  
2. Set goals.  
3. Clarify roles.  
4. Encourage ownership.  
5. Recognize effort.  
6. Build trust.

## Checklist

Use the practical checklist: daily, weekly, monthly, and occasional tasks.

## Conclusion

With these insights, you’ve taken the first steps to make your kitchen more professional, safe, and profitable. Small improvements can lead to major results in both quality and margin.  
  
Want to dive deeper? This give away is part of a 5-part hospitality e-book series. In the full series, you’ll find more strategies, examples, and practical tools to take your business to the next level.