NGLANCER BUSINESS LIBRARY

EBOOK

Start a Food Business

Small chops, catering, home cooking and food delivery — plan it, price it, run it hygienically and grow it

nglancer.com

For home cooks, caterers & food vendors

Start a Food Business
Small chops, catering, home cooking and food delivery — plan it, price it, run it hygienically and grow it

© 2026 NGLancer. All rights reserved. This ebook is licensed for the personal use of the buyer. Please don't copy, resell or share it — point friends to nglancer.com instead.

The information here is general guidance for small businesses and is not legal, tax or financial advice. Rules, fees and prices change; check current requirements with the relevant agency or a qualified professional before acting. Names and businesses in the examples are made up for illustration.

Contents

Why food — and what makes food businesses fail 4

Chapter 1 — Choose your food model 4

Chapter 2 — Recipe costing: know the cost of every plate 5

Chapter 3 — Food safety and hygiene 7

Chapter 4 — Registration, permits and NAFDAC 8

Chapter 5 — Packaging, presentation and branding 9

Chapter 6 — Orders, deposits and delivery 9

Chapter 7 — Handling big events 10

Chapter 8 — Marketing your food business 11

Chapter 9 — Grow: from kitchen to brand 12

A final word 12

Why food — and what makes food businesses fail

Everybody eats, every day. Parties, weddings, burials, birthdays, office meetings, church and mosque events, school runs and late-night cravings all create demand for good food. That's why food is one of the easiest businesses to start in Nigeria.

It is also one of the easiest to **lose money** in. The usual reasons:

- **Pricing by guesswork** — the cook doesn't know what a plate actually costs, so busy months still end with no profit.
- **Inconsistent taste and portions** — customers don't come back.
- **Poor hygiene** — one case of food poisoning can end a business.
- **Collecting no deposit** — the client cancels after you've bought ingredients.
- **Doing everything alone** — burnout, late deliveries and lost customers.

This book helps you avoid all five.

> 💡 **TIP**
> You don't need a shop to start. Many successful caterers began in their own kitchen, sold to friends and colleagues, and moved to a bigger kitchen only when orders proved the demand.

CHAPTER 1

Choose your food model

Model	What you sell	Good for	Watch out for
Small chops	Puff-puff, samosa, spring rolls, chicken, gizdodo, peppered snails...	Parties, offices, events	Frying space, staff on event days

Model	What you sell	Good for	Watch out for
Party catering	Jollof, fried rice, ofada, soups, swallow, proteins in coolers/trays	Weddings, birthdays, burials	Large upfront costs, big-event logistics
Lunch delivery	Daily meals to offices and shops	Steady weekly income	Timing, delivery riders, menus that travel well
Meal prep / soup bowls	Frozen soups, stews, sauces in bowls or packs	Busy families, people abroad sending gifts	Freezer space, cold chain
Pastries and cakes	Cakes, meat pies, doughnuts, cookies, bread	Birthdays, shops, schools	Equipment cost, consistent baking
Drinks	Zobo, kunu, tiger nut, smoothies, parfait, fruit juice	Gyms, offices, events, daily buyers	Short shelf life, refrigeration, packaging

Pick one to start

Choose the model that matches:

1. what you already cook **very well** (friends ask you to cook for them);
2. the money and space you have;
3. the customers you can reach this month.

You can add more later. A clear focus — "the small chops lady for office events" — is easier to market than "I cook everything".

✍️ **YOUR TASK**

Write your one-line food business: *"I sell [what] to [who] in [area] for [occasion]."* Example: *"I sell small chops packs and trays to offices and birthday parties in Lekki and Ajah."*

CHAPTER 2

Recipe costing: know the cost of every plate

This is the most important chapter in the book. You cannot price well until you know your **cost per portion**.

Step 1 — Write the standard recipe

For each dish, write exactly what goes into one pot or one batch, with quantities, and how many portions it makes.

Step 2 — Cost every ingredient

Use what you actually pay in your market today, including the small things: oil, seasoning, onions, pepper, salt, gas.

📘 **EXAMPLE**

Jollof rice with chicken — 1 batch = 20 portions (example prices — use yours)

Ingredient	Quantity used	Cost
Rice	4 kg	₦8,000
Chicken (20 pieces)	20 pieces	₦40,000
Tomato/pepper mix	1 batch	₦7,000
Vegetable oil	1 litre	₦3,500
Onions, seasoning, spices, salt	—	₦3,000
Gas / fuel share	—	₦2,000
Ingredients total		**₦63,500**

Ingredient cost per portion = ₦63,500 ÷ 20 = **₦3,175**

Add packaging: plate pack ₦300, spoon & napkin ₦70, sticker ₦30 = **₦400**

Total direct cost per portion = ₦3,575

Step 3 — Add overheads and labour

Overheads are monthly costs you pay whether you cook or not: rent, electricity, data, equipment repairs, marketing, your helper's salary. Divide them by the number of portions you sell in a typical month.

End of the free sample

Enjoyed it? Get the **full version** — with every chapter, worksheet and template — as an instant download on **NGLancer**.

nglancer.com · Marketplace → Digital products