DISH DIRECTORY — GUIDE

How to Leave a Fair Restaurant Review

A fair review describes what you ate, how the service went, and what stood out, so future diners can make better choices.

Updated October 10, 2026

A good review helps future diners choose well and helps restaurants improve. It takes only a few minutes to write one that is accurate, specific, and kind. These habits keep your reviews useful long after the meal ends.

What to Mention in a Review

Cover the points that matter most to someone deciding where to eat.

- Describe what you ordered and how each dish tasted. Specific dish names help readers far more than general praise or blame.
- Note the service you received, from greeting to farewell. Mention pace, attention, and how staff handled any request.
- Describe the setting and noise level in plain words. These details matter to diners planning dates, family meals, or work dinners.
- Comment on value in general terms. Say whether the meal felt worth its price without quoting exact figures from memory.
- Add context such as the day, mealtime, and party size. A busy weekend dinner differs from a quiet weekday lunch.

How to Be Accurate and Fair

Fairness is what separates a useful review from a venting note.

- Write only about your own visit and what you saw yourself. Secondhand stories and rumors do not belong in a review.
- Separate facts from opinions with clear wording. Say what happened first, then say how you felt about it.
- Judge the restaurant by what it tries to be. A casual cafe and a fine dining room deserve different yardsticks.
- Weigh the whole visit instead of one moment. A single slow course matters less when everything else went well.
- Check details before you post, such as dish names and the order of events. Small errors weaken trust in the whole review.

What to Leave Out

Some content harms more than it helps, so keep it out of your review.

- Leave out insults, name calling, and guesses about staff motives. Criticize the experience,

never the person.

- Leave out complaints about things outside the restaurant's control. Traffic, weather, and your companion's mood are not the kitchen's fault.
- Leave out private details about staff or other diners. No review needs names or personal description.
- Leave out demands or threats aimed at getting a refund or free meal. Honest feedback earns more respect than pressure.
- Leave out health claims you cannot prove, such as blaming a meal for illness. If you were truly unwell, contact the restaurant or local officials directly.

When and How to Post

Timing and tone shape how your words land.

- Write soon after the visit while details are fresh. Prompt reviews carry sharper, more reliable detail.
- Give the restaurant a chance to fix problems during the visit. Mention in your review how they responded, since that helps readers judge fairly.
- Use a calm and polite tone even when the meal disappointed you. Measured words carry more weight than angry ones.
- Post your review in one suitable place rather than copying it everywhere. One thoughtful review beats many hasty ones.
- Proofread before you submit. Short paragraphs and clean wording make your review easy to trust and easy to read.

After You Post

Your job is mostly done, but two small steps close it well.

- Read any reply from the restaurant with an open mind. A polite answer may add context you missed.
- Update your review if you return and things changed. A short note about a better second visit is generous and fair.

Frequently asked questions

What should I include in a restaurant review?

Describe the food, service, setting, and value you experienced on your visit. Mention specific dishes and details that help others decide.

What should I avoid in a restaurant review?

Avoid insults, guesses about motives, and complaints about things outside the restaurant's control. Stick to what actually happened during your own visit.

Should I complain to the restaurant before writing a bad review?

Yes, give the restaurant a chance to fix the problem first when you can. An accurate review written after that is fairer and more useful.