



restaurant
restart | recover | re-emerge

DO THE MATH: TABLE TURNOVER

Measure and maximize your rates



Every operator wants to get the optimal number of table turns during any given shift. Obviously the more customers you serve, the better for your bottom line. And the less time customers have to wait for a table, the better the chance they'll rate your restaurant as delivering a great guest experience. Technology can also help (like POS systems and tableside payment), as can staff training. But the first step is paying attention! So if your grasp on your table-turn numbers is a little wobbly, begin with the exercise below.

During the dinner period, tables usually flip 3 times (every 1-½ hours) for a family restaurant; figure 2 hours for fine dining and 1 hour +15 minutes for a casual venue.

TABLE TURNS

# OF PARTIES / # OF TABLES = TURNOVER RATE	
First, choose your time period, e.g. 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. (5 hours)	
No. of parties served during that period:	
	÷
No. of tables occupied during that period:	
	=
TURNOVER RATE	

FOR EXAMPLE:

- 20 parties, 5 tables
- 20 / 5 = 4 turns during a 4-hour period

TICK, TICK, TICK:

- Are servers getting to each table within 1 minute after seating?
- Is staff having issues turning tables during certain times?
- Are certain sections/servers turning more slowly than others?
- Are dishes being cleared as each guest finishes, rather than all at once?

ASK, ASK, ASK:

- Does staff query whether guests are returning, thus saving time explaining the menu?
- Are servers making tradeoffs with check average (e.g. missing the chance to upsell dessert)?
- Could you invite customers to move to the bar for a free drink, and free up their table?