

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a black t-shirt and a small hoop earring, is shown in profile. She is holding a green paper bag with the Uber Eats logo. The background is a blurred night scene with warm lights and green foliage.

Uber Eats

2025 restaurant delivery trends: a guide to what's next

Restaurant delivery has changed dramatically since the early days of pizza and Chinese takeout. People expect on-demand delivery from their favorite restaurants—and if it's not offered, customers will go elsewhere. Restaurants must meet customers where they are, whether that's on a restaurant's own website or app, or through a third-party marketplace like Uber Eats. Delivery is a critical revenue stream that can make or break a restaurant business, and 2025 brings new technology and trends that restaurants need to keep up with.

The online food delivery segment is expected to reach a global market volume of \$746 billion by 2033.¹

While managing delivery can add complexity, it also offers the potential for greater operational efficiency and market reach. For context, in September 2024, the number of monthly active users of Uber's delivery platform exceeded 50 million for the first time in Uber's history—that's a massive potential for restaurants.²

In this guide, we'll explore the key trends shaping restaurant delivery in 2025, organized by concerns that are top of mind for operators like yourself.

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¹[Online Food Delivery Market Size by Service Type](#), The Brainy Insights (July 2024).

²[Q3 2024 Prepared Remarks](#), Uber (October 2024).

Demand: acquiring customers and driving predictable revenue

A 2024 [US Foods survey](#) found that American consumers choose to order takeout or delivery about 3 times a month. That's often—and restaurants must capture that demand when people are searching for a meal to be delivered.

Increasing order volume is helpful, but sustainable revenue relies on loyal customers who purchase from your restaurant on a repeat basis. Paying attention to these trends and developing strategies around them can help you increase demand for your delivery offerings.

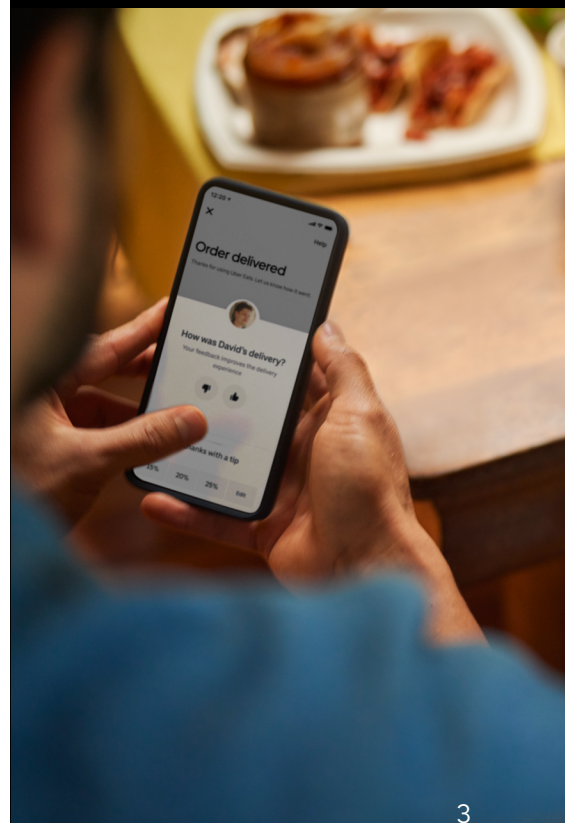
Microtargeted ads provide timely recommendations

Restaurants are now turning to tools that integrate with real-time weather data and events so they can serve up appropriate menu recommendations to customers. According to [evok advertising](#), more than 90% of restaurant operators indicate that weather affects sales and foot traffic. When temperature spikes hit downtown areas, these tools are capable of sending nearby office workers perfectly timed promotions for iced beverages and light fare. As concert venues empty, attendees' phones might light up with late-night dining options. Even incoming storm systems trigger automated campaigns for delivery services and comfort foods. For restaurant owners, this means marketing dollars are spent more wisely, targeting customers exactly when they're most likely to convert.

For example, when [Spin! Pizza introduced](#) “crummy weather days” discounts on social media, they saw a 20% increase in foot traffic during the winter. Pete's Cafe and Bakery took [a similar approach using Google AdWords](#): they promoted hot soups when the temperatures dropped below 60 degrees and displayed salads and sandwiches when it was above 60 degrees. They exceeded benchmarks by 124%, with an increase in click-through rates and sales lift.



When you list your restaurant on Uber Eats, you'll gain access to a suite of self-serve tools that can help you increase your visibility and drive more orders during relevant moments. With [ads and offers](#), you can place your brand front and center for browsing customers when they're in their moment of highest intent to purchase.



Membership services drive customer loyalty

Younger generations in particular—think Gen Z—are paying for memberships and recurring services at a higher rate than older generations, giving restaurants a prime opportunity to win customers and keep them. A [2024 Minna Technologies consumer and business survey](#) shows that 70% of Gen Z and Millennials are using subscription services, compared to 55% of people aged 65 and older.

Restaurants are catching on to this trend by offering coffee and drink memberships (cue Panera's [Unlimited Sip Club](#) and BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse's [Beer Club](#)) and regular discounts plus benefits (like Sweetgreen's [Sweetpass](#)).

Kristen Hawley, founder of [Expedite](#), a newsletter about restaurant technology and the future of hospitality, says, "I first saw subscriptions during the worst days of the pandemic, introduced hastily to add revenue. Restaurants that have continued offering subscriptions in the years since have created fun and interesting offerings for customers. Subscriptions help guests interact with your restaurant outside its four walls and are a great way to engage diners who can't come in as often as they like."



When it comes to encouraging loyalty on Uber, restaurants can enjoy access to [Uber One](#) members, who pay to enjoy exclusive discounts and benefits like \$0 Delivery Fee. As of February 2025, Uber One has over 30 million members globally, making it a valuable program that can drive more predictable revenue and higher average order values for restaurants.



Technology integrations create a cohesive user experience

The pandemic accelerated omnichannel experiences for restaurants, and 80% of those [surveyed by The Atlantic in 2021](#) said they plan to maintain these new channels post-COVID. Successful restaurant groups are increasingly turning to a [fully integrated tech stack](#) that powers delivery across locations and helps restaurateurs meet customers where they are.

³[“Restaurant Technology Landscape Report 2024,”](#) National Restaurant Association (March 2024).

76%
of restaurant operators say using technology gives them a competitive edge.³



Uber integrates seamlessly with restaurants using Toast products, whether they're accepting orders from the Uber Eats marketplace or from their own Toast-powered online ordering channels (and then using Uber Direct for first-party delivery support). With [this integration](#), Toast restaurants can expand across channels and improve their customer experience, all while operating efficiently.

Efficiency: keeping business costs and operations lean

While strong demand is essential, profitability depends heavily on efficient operations. In 2025, new technologies and delivery models will help you handle higher order volumes while maintaining profitability across all your locations.

Let's explore 2 key areas that are helping restaurants become more efficient in 2025: advanced fulfillment solutions, and AI and automation.

Advanced fulfillment solutions

According to a [2023 report from Uber and Edelman Dxl](#), 69% of consumers would choose a company that offers express delivery over one that does not—which means that restaurants must be able to offer efficient delivery. Restaurants are discovering that strategic partnerships and new operational models can dramatically improve delivery efficiency and expand their reach.

→ Ghost kitchens as micro-fulfillment centers

There are [more than 7,500 ghost kitchens](#) in the US. These kitchens serve as strategic food-delivery aggregators that help restaurant brands expand delivery radius and optimize routes without the overhead of traditional storefronts. When restaurants partner with strategically placed ghost kitchens, they're closer to a greater amount of existing and potential demand—and they can reach new customers while keeping delivery distances to a minimum. In 2025, we'll see more operators take this concept further with a new last-mile delivery approach, where multiple brands share a central delivery hub.



→ Hybrid delivery models: the best of both worlds

To provide better geographical coverage and uninterrupted service, successful restaurants are adopting [hybrid delivery models](#) that combine in-house fleets with third-party delivery platforms when their in-house fleet is stretched thin.

For example, instead of hiring more drivers or paying drivers overtime, a restaurant can tap into a third-party network to fill the gaps. Customers continue to place orders directly with the restaurant, and the third-party network helps ensure timely deliveries regardless of volume. This is efficient from both an operational and cost perspective.

AI and automation

From restaurant operations to personalization, AI and automation are helping improve the user experience, make deliveries more efficient, and increase order values.

→ Smart order stacking: AI-powered route optimization

Smart order stacking uses AI predictions to analyze patterns and optimize driver routes, resulting in higher throughput during peak times and faster deliveries for customers. Beyond improving efficiency, this tech also reduces vehicle emissions by minimizing the number of trips required, helping your restaurant network meet sustainability goals while improving bottom-line performance.



Spanning mobility, delivery, and freight, Uber's global on-demand platform is built on massive data sets that can help dispatch, map, and route local deliveries in a smooth and smart way.

→ Automated systems

In 2025, AI will not only help with route optimization—it will also improve kitchen operations. Advanced kitchen systems will optimize prep times by analyzing historical data and real-time conditions across your locations. More than half of restaurant owners say they plan to invest in technology to boost productivity or efficiency in the service area, according to a [2024 National Restaurant Association report](#). For example, [Sweetgreen's Infinite Kitchen](#) has an automated system that dispenses the right portion of salad ingredients into bowls—increasing the number of orders the location can handle.

→ Autonomous delivery to reduce last-mile delivery costs

Autonomous delivery solutions are poised to improve the most expensive part of the fulfillment process: the last mile. Self-driving vehicles and drones are particularly well-suited for suburban and less-congested areas, where many restaurants are expanding. While 2024 saw limited pilot programs in suburban areas, 2025 will bring broader adoption of these technologies.

Hawley says the potential business impact became clear in a conversation with a San Francisco-based restaurateur: “They made an interesting point about operating in challenging physical environments like San Francisco: If the restaurant could fly orders across the SF Bay to Oakland, it would expand their radius and reach by order of magnitude.”

Currently, most drone delivery services can carry between 5 and 25 pounds, making them ideal for smaller food orders but limiting their use for large catering orders or multi-family deliveries. Restaurants must think about their strategy for deploying autonomous delivery alongside traditional methods based on order size and delivery zone.

The autonomous last-mile delivery market is projected to grow to \$51 billion by 2028.⁴



Uber is well-positioned to adapt as [autonomous vehicle technology](#) advances, with several partners across mobility, delivery, and freight.

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⁴[Autonomous Last-Mile Delivery Market Size Worldwide](#), Statista (November 2023).

→ Menu personalization

Restaurants are using AI to create custom menu recommendations and personalized promotions based on a customer's past orders. AI-powered technology can analyze past orders to suggest add-ons. It can suggest, for example, that someone complete their normal lunch order with a seasonal salad—or it can send a time-specific offer (like an “It’s time for dinner” notification) at the time a customer normally orders restaurant delivery for dinner.

“It’s important we’re conscious of AI and its uses. In the short term, AI-driven personalization feels useful, exciting, novel, and fresh—just as any new technology does,” Hawley says. “I’m excited about its potential to keep messaging and suggestions relevant and accessible to consumers, but wary of our tolerance of the volume of messaging we may receive. I can’t predict the future here, but I’d advise restaurants to keep their AI-generated messaging as targeted and relevant as possible.”



Quality: exceeding customer expectations

Efficiency gains shouldn't come at the expense of quality, and restaurants are using technology to keep standards high. With [72% of consumers](#) more likely to continue ordering from companies with express delivery, restaurants are tasked with meeting these expectations while maintaining food quality.

Smart design to improve the customer experience

→ Restaurant design accommodates more order pickups

Restaurants are optimizing their physical spaces for delivery and pickup efficiency. Take a cue from Burger King: it's creating storefronts that are [60% smaller](#) to allow space for dedicated pickup lockers and curbside spots.

→ Smart lockers make contactless pickup easy

Temperature-controlled [smart lockers](#) provide flexibility for customers and drivers. They provide the infrastructure for contactless pickups while maintaining food quality and reducing labor costs across locations. For example, the restaurant staff places the order in the appropriate smart locker, whether that's heated, refrigerated, or frozen, and the courier can pick up the order without having to wait or interact with staff.



Sustainability

→ Reduced packaging wins the hearts of the younger generation

People will pay premium prices for sustainable options—this is especially true among younger generations. According to [Simon Kucher's 2024 US Restaurant Sustainability Study](#), most consumers are willing to pay over 10% price premium to dine at a green restaurant, and half of Gen Zers are willing to pay more than a 20% premium.

Restaurants are reducing their packaging and using reusable, recycled, bioplastic, and compostable materials when possible.



Uber provides access to discounts on sustainable packaging options to help restaurants reduce their environmental impact while giving customers what they want.



Top delivery days in 2025: planning for peak demand

While personalization and quality control are important year-round, understanding peak delivery periods can help restaurants optimize operations and staffing across locations. As we tackle 2025 head on, let's look at patterns and high-peak days when, based on Uber's [2024 Cravings Report](#), delivery orders are likely to be off the charts.

Highest-volume events

Major events will continue to drive significant spikes in delivery demand, with data showing consistent year-over-year growth:

- Football's biggest gameday
- Halloween
- Election nights
- Thanksgiving Eve
- New Year's Eve

Weekly patterns and peak times

Fridays and Saturdays remain the busiest delivery days, with late-night orders continuing to be a significant revenue driver. Restaurant operators can use this predictability to:

- Adjust staffing levels across locations
- Pre-prepare high-demand items
- Coordinate with couriers for increased coverage
- Balance order flow between locations during peak times



On election nights, alcohol delivery sales increased by 10% day-over-day and 20% week-over-week.⁵



Thanksgiving searches for specific items like sweet potatoes and cranberry sauce start spiking weeks in advance.⁵

⁵"2024 Cravings Report," Uber (November 2024).

Stay ahead of trends by working with a partner that's building toward the future

Partnering with Uber can help you reach your existing and future customers where they are—whether they're ordering from you directly or through the Uber Eats marketplace.

Restaurants need to be ready to serve customers across channels. With the [Uber Eats marketplace](#), you can reach new high-intent customers, stand out with marketing solutions, and fulfill orders in many ways. And with [Uber Direct](#), you can continue to accept orders on your own website or app while gaining access to Uber's network of couriers to provide affordable on-demand delivery that customers can count on.



In 2025, Uber can help you scale your restaurant operation—whether you have one storefront or many—and stay ahead of the curve.

**Learn
more →**