Allergen matrix template: a worked café-menu example

Crewbright printable guide | Reviewed 11 November 2026

An allergen matrix template helps a café organise ingredient information by dish. Its value comes from the current labels, complete recipes and checks behind every entry. Use this original worked example to practise building that evidence trail, then copy the blank record for your own approved system.

Fictional learning example: the products and recipes below are invented. They provide no information about a real café or food. Confirm actual ingredients, supplier precautionary statements, preparation controls and the food's sales format before giving a customer an answer.

Start with three complete recipe records

Recipe / version	Components in this example	Evidence references
A: Egg-and-cress sandwich v1	Wheat bread; butter; egg; mayonnaise containing egg and mustard; cress. These are the only intentional allergen sources assumed in the fictional recipe.	A1 bread label; A2 butter label; A3 egg specification; A4 mayonnaise label; A5 cress record.
B: Chickpea and tahini salad v1	Chickpeas, lettuce, lemon, olive oil and tahini containing sesame. Fictional supplier precautionary statement about nuts is recorded separately.	B1-B5 ingredient records; B6 tahini label and its precautionary statement.
C: Creamy tomato soup v1	Tomatoes, onion, olive oil, stock containing celery, cream containing milk and parsley. Served without bread or extra garnish in this defined version.	C1-C6 ingredient records, including full stock ingredients.

Worked café-menu allergen matrix

Key: P = present as an intentional ingredient in this fictional recipe. 0 = none identified as an intentional ingredient after checking all components in this example. A 0 gives no assurance about cross-contact or suitability for an allergy. ? = unresolved; hold the answer while the responsible person checks. Keep supplier precautionary statements and preparation risks alongside the matrix.

Allergen category	A: sandwich v1	B: salad v1	C: soup v1
Celery	0	0	P
Cereals containing gluten (name the cereal)	P: wheat	0	0

Allergen category	A: sandwich v1	B: salad v1	C: soup v1
Crustaceans	0	0	0
Eggs	P	0	0
Fish	0	0	0
Lupin	0	0	0
Milk	P	0	P
Molluscs	0	0	0
Mustard	P	0	0
Peanuts	0	0	0
Sesame	0	P	0
Soybeans / soya	0	0	0
Sulphur dioxide and sulphites above the declaration threshold	0	0	0
Nuts (name the specific nut)	0	0	0

For B, the fictional tahini label's precautionary statement stays visible in the supporting record even though nuts are marked 0 for intentional ingredients. The responsible person must assess and communicate the actual supplier and kitchen risks. An empty box, a vegan description or removal of a topping cannot establish suitability.

Copy this blank allergen record

Create one reviewed recipe/version per column in your own matrix, or use the vertical sheet below for each dish. Start entries as unresolved until evidence has been checked. Copy or print the table; it is an on-page template, separate from the existing free PDF pack.

Allergen category	Ingredient status and specific cereal/nut	Label / recipe evidence reference
Celery	To check	_____
Cereals containing gluten (name the cereal)	To check	_____
Crustaceans	To check	_____

Allergen category	Ingredient status and specific cereal/nut	Label / recipe evidence reference
Eggs	To check	_____
Fish	To check	_____
Lupin	To check	_____
Milk	To check	_____
Molluscs	To check	_____
Mustard	To check	_____
Peanuts	To check	_____
Sesame	To check	_____
Soybeans / soya	To check	_____
Sulphur dioxide and sulphites above the declaration threshold	To check	_____
Nuts (name the specific nut)	To check	_____

Document control: dish and serving variant _____; recipe version _____; supplier/product references _____; checked by/date _____; approved by/date _____; next review/change trigger _____. Record precautionary statements, cross-contact assessment and customer-information location separately.

Release the information through the whole venue

Compare the exact delivered product with the approved recipe, including sauces, stocks, oils and garnishes.

Resolve conflicting or missing information with the responsible colleague before the affected food or answer is released.

Update the active matrix, recipe, relevant package labels, online ordering information and service briefing together.

Identify already prepared batches and record their separate decision. Retire superseded service copies.

Ask a server to locate the current answer for one actual dish, then record the release check and next review trigger.

For loose food, the FSA recommends written allergen information supported by a conversation. PPDS food has its own food-name and full-ingredients labelling requirements, with allergens emphasised. This matrix supports the information system; check the rules for the actual sales format.

Connect the matrix to training and handover

Use the ingredient-change handover log when a product changes and read the worked substitution guide. Allergen Awareness and PPDS Training Online develops the knowledge behind the checks. Local procedures and supervised practice make that knowledge usable in your venue.

Sources and scope

Checked 6 November 2026 against FSA allergen guidance and non-prepacked-food best practice, for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scottish businesses should also use Food Standards Scotland's CookSafe. The example and blank worksheet are original Crewbright learning material.

Latest guidance: https://crewbright.co.uk/resources/menu-allergen-matrix-template/