



Mapping your route to market

S H Foodie Start-Up Guide For Aspiring Food & Beverage Entrepreneurs

Welcome to the Start of Something Delicious

Whether you're at the idea stage or mixing drinks in your kitchen, this guide is designed to help you navigate the exciting (and sometimes overwhelming) process of taking a product from concept to commercial product.

At S H Foodie, we specialise in helping founders like you develop, refine, and scale their food and beverage products – from sodas to cocktails, functional beverages to protein drinks and powders. Not quite ready to start? No problem. This guide is your first step.

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Understanding the Beverage Industry

The food & beverage world is fast-growing and competitive.

Trends like alcohol-free, plant-based, functional, and sustainable packaging are surging

Brands that succeed have three things: stand out flavour, clear branding, and commercial viability.

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From Idea or Kitchen Concept to Commercial Product Essential Steps:

1. Explore and refine your idea or recipe concept
2. Lab-based formulation with shelf-life in mind
3. Nutritional analysis & legal compliance
4. Packaging format selection (e.g., cans, bottles, bag-in-box etc.)
5. Branding & Packaging Design
6. Trial runs and scale-up
7. Final production & distribution

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Realistic Budgeting - Approx. Cost Range

Recipe Development – £9,500 – £19,500 (depending on number of SKUs and overall project complexity)

Branding & Packaging Design – £2,000 – £6,000 (depending on the scope and level of service required)

Accelerated shelf-life testing – £350 per product

Pilot run – (e.g., 500 units) £2,000+

Full-scale manufacturing – £10,000+

Tip: Start with what you can afford, but budget realistically

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Brand & Business Basics

Define your unique proposition: What makes your drink different?

Know your ideal customer: Who are you targeting?

Nail your brand story: This helps investors and consumers connect.



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Funding & Growth

Common Funding Sources: Personal investment / family & friends, Angel investors, SEIS/EIS-eligible rounds (UK only) and Crowd-funding platforms

Investor Ready Checklist: ☐ Defined target audience - ☐ Strong visual branding
☐ Costings & margin understanding - ☐ Plan to reach retail or D2C markets

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Are You Ready?

Use this quick checklist: ☐ I have a product idea or kitchen recipe - ☐ I know my target audience
☐ I understand the approximate budget required - ☐ I have at least £9,500 to begin
☐ I want expert support in developing & scaling my drink

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Useful Resources

Canva / Adobe Express: Free basic design platform for labels and decks

Trello / Notion: Project management tools

Food.gov.uk: Labelling and compliance info

Podcast: "The Delicious Business" & "Brand Growth Heroes" interviews with food & drink founders

Bread & Jam: UK based community and platform that supports emerging food & drink brands. It's best known for its annual festival which brings together challenger food and drink startups, investors, buyers, retailers, suppliers, and service providers.

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When You're Ready, We're Here

At S H Foodie, we're here to support you every step of the way with:

Recipe Development: Creating stand out formulations tailored to your vision

Completion Packs: Everything you need to take your product to manufacturers, including full recipe breakdown
Ingredient declaration & nutritional info - Costings & ingredient MOQs - Supplier details - Factory method & processing guidance - Claims and compliance notes - Full ownership of the intellectual property (IP)

Pilot Runs: Small-scale production runs ideal for testing your product, gathering feedback, or showcasing to buyers, retailers, and at trade events.

Manufacturer Introductions: We'll connect you with trusted partners for full-scale manufacturing when you're ready

Branding & Packaging Design: We'll connect you with our trusted branding & design agency

Packaging Sourcing: Help finding the right format and supplier for your brand

Business Mentoring: Practical advice to guide your growth

Start from where you are. Grow with support.
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This guide was created by S H Foodie to empower the next generation of food and beverage innovators.