



When Buying a Food Truck or Trailer

When buying a used food truck/trailer, thoroughly inspect the structural integrity, plumbing, and electrical systems while verifying all equipment works under load. Key priorities include checking for rust and leaks, ensuring compliance with local health department regulations, confirming clean title paperwork, and testing appliances.

1. Structural & Exterior Inspection

- **Frame and Chassis:** Check for rust, damage, or signs of stress, particularly at connection points.
- **Roof and Seams:** Inspect for leaks, water damage, or poor patches. Check roof corners and around vents.
- **Axles and Tires:** Examine axle straightness and tire tread for uneven wear, which could indicate alignment issues.
- **Towing Assembly:** Ensure hitch, chains, and emergency brakes are functional.
- **Exterior Skin:** Look for dents, holes, or damage that could affect insulation.

2. Kitchen Equipment & Utilities

- **Appliances:** Turn on all stoves, fryers, and griddles; test if they heat evenly.
- **Refrigeration:** Run refrigerators/freezers for at least 20 minutes to verify they maintain proper temperature.
- **Exhaust Hood:** Ensure the motor runs quietly and draws air effectively.
- **Gas System:** Check for leaks in propane lines and ensure all connections are secure and up to code.
- **Plumbing/Sinks:** Inspect the three-compartment sink and handwashing sink for proper plumbing and hot water pressure.
- **Water Tanks:** Check the fresh water and waste water (grey water) tanks for leaks or damage.

3. Electrical System

- **Load Test:** Ensure the trailer can handle all equipment running simultaneously.
- **Amperage:** Verify the panel and service, typically 30–50 amps, can handle your equipment needs.
- **Wiring:** Check that wiring is safe, organized, and properly connected.
- **Plugs and Outlets:** Inspect the main shore power plug for damage.

4. Documentation & Legal

- VIN Number: Match the chassis serial number to the title.
- Certifications: Request previous gas, electrical, and sanitation certificates. If expired, assume repair costs.
- Prior repairs: Ask to review available paperwork concerning previous repairs.
- License/Registration: Ensure the trailer is current on registration.

5. Final Considerations

- Cleanliness: Look under equipment and in hard-to-reach corners for hidden rust or grease buildup.
- Storage: Confirm there is adequate storage for supplies.
- Layout: Ensure the workflow fits your menu.
- Generator: If included, ensure the generator is large enough for the trailer's power requirements.