

Empanada Food Truck Startup Checklist (USA)

This checklist is designed to guide first-time and experienced entrepreneurs through the key steps of launching an empanada food truck or trailer business in the United States.

1. Business Planning & Research

- ■ Define your empanada concept (traditional, gourmet, vegan, fusion)
- ■ Identify target customers and operating locations
- ■ Research competitors and local pricing
- ■ Choose business name and branding direction
- ■ Create a basic startup budget and revenue forecast

2. Legal & Licensing Requirements

- ■ Register your business (LLC or Corporation)
- ■ Apply for EIN (IRS)
- ■ Obtain food handler and food safety certifications
- ■ Apply for local health department permits
- ■ Secure mobile food vendor permit
- ■ Check zoning, parking, and vending regulations
- ■ Purchase business and liability insurance

3. Trailer or Truck Selection

- ■ Decide between food truck vs food trailer
- ■ Select size and kitchen layout based on menu
- ■ Confirm DOT / VIN / local compliance
- ■ Plan custom layout and equipment list
- ■ Order unit from manufacturer (e.g., ZZKNOWN)

4. Kitchen Equipment & Utilities

- ■ Commercial fryer or oven for empanadas
- ■ Dough prep table and storage bins
- ■ Reach-in refrigerator or freezer
- ■ Stainless steel work tables
- ■ Vent hood and fire suppression system
- ■ Fresh water tank and wastewater tank
- ■ Handwash sink and three-compartment sink
- ■ Electrical system and external power inlet

5. Branding & Marketing Setup

- ■ Design logo and trailer wrap
- ■ Set up Google Business Profile
- ■ Create Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok accounts
- ■ Prepare menu board and pricing signage

- ■ Plan soft opening or launch event

6. Operations & Staffing

- ■ Source empanada ingredients and packaging
- ■ Establish food prep workflow
- ■ Hire and train staff (if applicable)
- ■ Create daily opening and closing procedures
- ■ Set up POS system and payment processing

7. Pre-Launch Final Checks

- ■ Health inspection approval
- ■ Fire department inspection (if required)
- ■ Test kitchen workflow and equipment
- ■ Confirm supply inventory
- ■ Schedule first operating day and location