USER MANUAL

PHP Restaurant Marketplace

Step-by-step guides for the website, the restaurant owner panel and the main admin panel of Restaurant Marketplace - from the first installation to payments, commissions and AI features.

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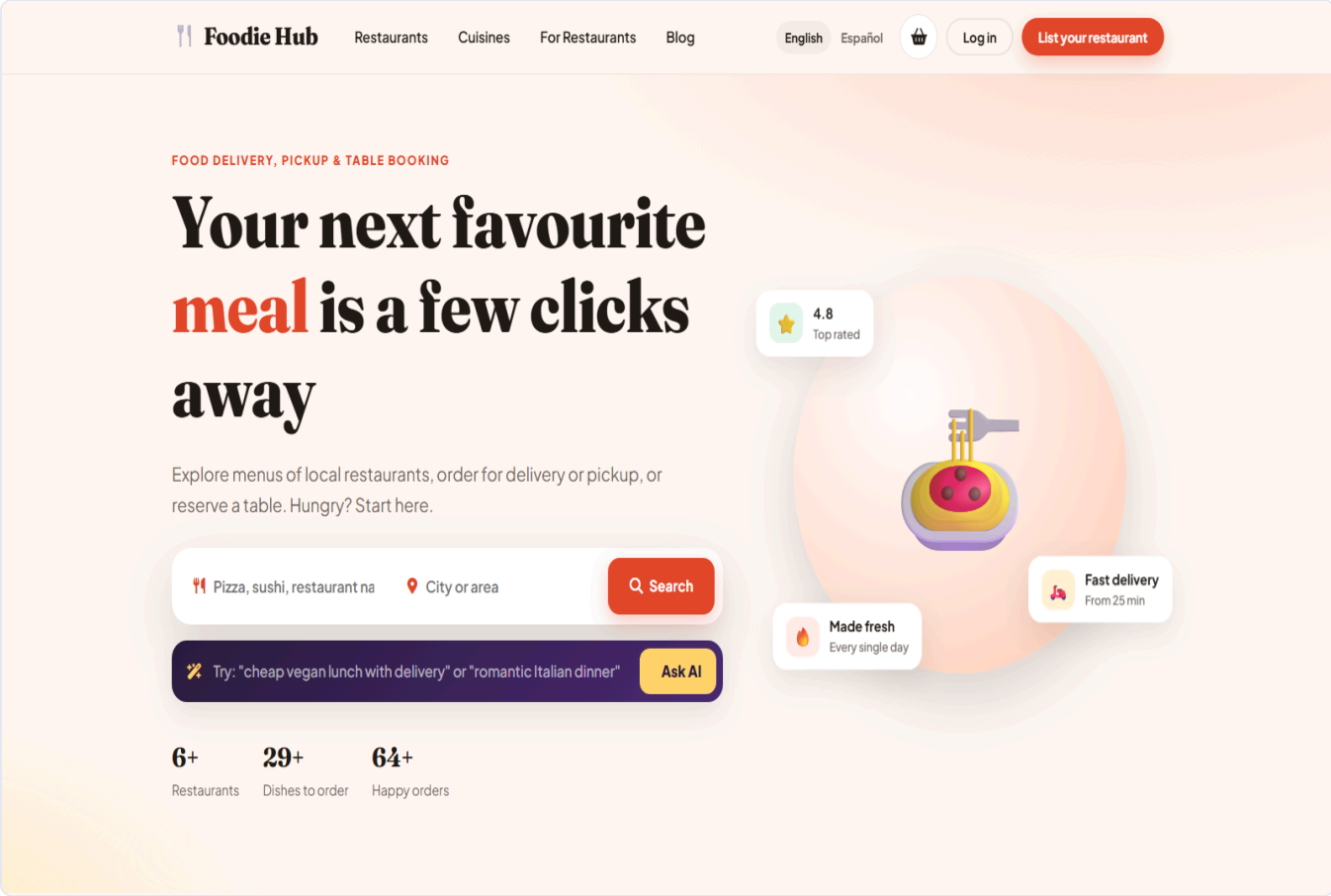
Reference

1. Customization and folder structure
2. Security best practices
3. Troubleshooting and frequently asked questions

GETTING STARTED

Restaurant Marketplace script: features overview

Restaurant Marketplace is a ready-to-run PHP script for building your own food ordering and restaurant discovery website - a marketplace where many restaurants list themselves, publish menus, take delivery and pickup orders and receive table bookings, while you earn money from them.



The home page of the marketplace with search box and AI search bar

The three parts of the script

Part	Address	Who uses it
Website (front end)	`/`	Visitors and customers: search restaurants, read menus, order, book a table, leave reviews.
Restaurant owner panel	`/user_admin/`	Restaurant owners: profile, menu, orders, bookings, reviews, promo codes, earnings, plan.
Main admin panel	`/ADMIN/`	You, the marketplace owner: restaurants, users, payments, pages, settings, languages, statistics.

Main features

- **Restaurant directory** with search, cuisine, location, price and rating filters.
- **AI search** that turns a sentence such as "cheap vegan lunch with delivery" into search filters (read more).
- **Online ordering** for delivery and pickup, with a live basket, options and extras, tips and promo codes.
- **Table booking** requests that the restaurant confirms or declines by e-mail.
- **Reviews** with replies from the restaurant, and customer favourites.
- **Stripe and PayPal** payments, cash on delivery, and bank transfer for subscription plans.
- **Three charging modes** - monthly fee, commission paid later, or split payment at the moment of purchase (read more).
- **AI assistant** for restaurant descriptions, dish descriptions, replies to reviews and importing a whole menu from pasted text.
- **Multi-language** website and owner panel; English and Spanish are included.
- **SEO friendly** pages, page titles, meta descriptions, clean URLs, blog and FAQ.
- **Mobile first** responsive design for every screen.

How the money flows

You decide how the marketplace earns. You can charge restaurants a monthly plan, take a commission on every order, or both. Customers can pay online with a card or PayPal, or in cash to the restaurant. The charging modes page explains each option in detail.

Where to start

1. Follow Installation to put the script online.
2. Go through the first steps checklist to configure the basics.
3. Choose your charging mode and connect Stripe or PayPal.
4. Invite your first restaurants - they use the owner panel.

GETTING STARTED

Installation

The script runs on any standard PHP and MySQL hosting. There is no command line, framework or build step - upload the files, edit one configuration file and run the installer.

Server requirements

- PHP 7.4 or newer (PHP 8.x recommended)
- MySQL or MariaDB with utf8mb4 support
- PHP extensions: `PDO MySQL`, `cURL`, `GD`, `mbstring`
- Apache with `mod_rewrite` if you want search-engine-friendly URLs (optional)
- HTTPS is strongly recommended, and required by Stripe webhooks and PayPal in live mode

Install in five steps

1. **Upload the files.** Copy the whole script folder to your hosting - to the web root (`public_html`) or to a sub-folder such as `/restaurants`.
2. **Create an empty database** in your hosting control panel (or let the installer create it if your MySQL user is allowed to).
3. **Edit `config.php`.** Set your domain name, the database host, user, password and database name. The table prefix (`restaurants_`) can stay as it is.

```
$DOMAIN_NAME = "www.yourdomain.com";
$DBHost = "localhost";
$DBUser = "your_db_user";
$DBPass = "your_db_password";
$DBName = "your_database";
$DBprefix = "restaurants_";
```

4. **Run the installer.** Open `https://www.yourdomain.com/install.php` in the browser. It creates all tables, the default settings, the first administrator, cuisines, listing plans, pages and the FAQ. You can optionally add demo restaurants.
5. **Delete `install.php`** from the server when it has finished.

Delete `install.php` after installation. Leaving it on the server is a security risk.

Folder permissions

PHP must be able to write to these folders: `uploaded_images/`, `thumbnails/`, `languages/` and `locations/`. On most hosting this is permission `755` (or `775`) with the correct owner.

First login

Panel	Address	Default login
Main admin	`/ADMIN/`	admin / admin123

Restaurant owners (demo data only)	`/user_admin/`	owner@example.com / owner123
Customer (demo data only)	`/` → Log in	customer@example.com / customer123

Change the administrator password immediately: **Home → Change password** in the admin panel. See admin users and permissions.

Installing in a sub-folder

If the script is not in the web root, set `$DOMAIN_NAME` with the folder, for example `www.yourdomain.com/restaurants`. When you turn on search-engine-friendly URLs, make sure the `RewriteBase` in `.htaccess` matches that folder.

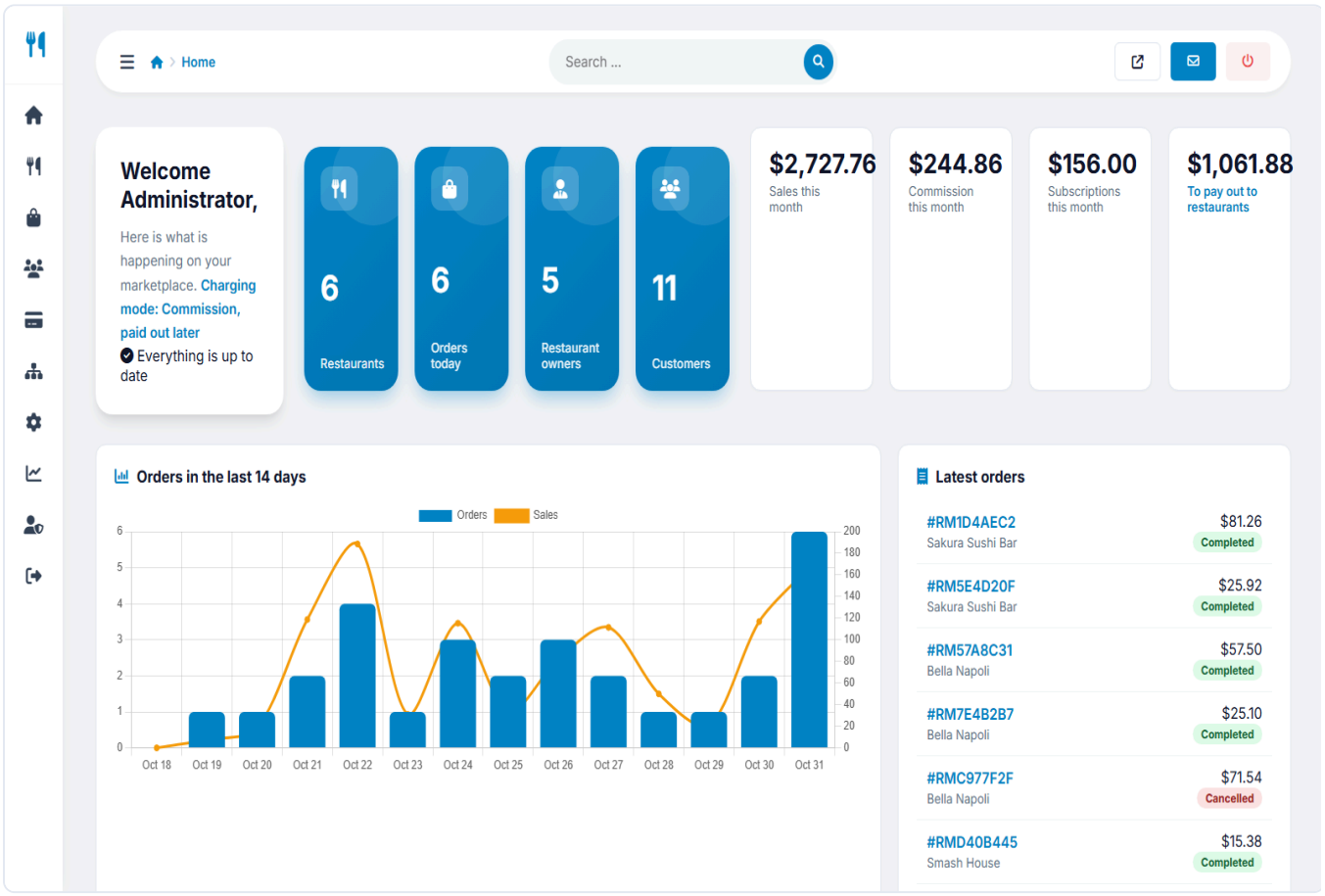
Optional: Stripe webhook

For reliable online payments add a Stripe webhook that points to `https://www.yourdomain.com/webhook_stripe.php`. See Stripe setup.

GETTING STARTED

First steps: configure your marketplace

After installation work through this list. Every step takes a few minutes, and the admin dashboard also shows reminders for the most important ones.



The admin dashboard shows what is happening in your marketplace

1. **General settings.** In **Settings** → **Configuration options** set the site name, company name, administrator e-mail, time zone and default language. See configuration options.
2. **Logo and favicon.** Upload them in **Website** → **Logo and favicon**.
3. **E-mail sending.** Turn on SMTP in the same settings page and press *Save and send test e-mail*. Order, booking and password-reset e-mails depend on it.
4. **Currency.** In **Payments** → **Payment settings** enter your 3-letter currency code (USD, EUR, GBP...).
5. **Choose how you earn.** Select one of the three charging modes and set your commission or your listing plans.
6. **Connect payments.** Add your Stripe and/or PayPal keys, or keep cash payments only.
7. **Switch on AI.** Paste an API key in **Settings** → **Artificial intelligence** - see AI settings.
8. **Cuisines and locations.** Review the cuisines and the locations list in Restaurants → Cuisines / Locations.
9. **Pages, FAQ and blog.** Edit About us, Terms and Privacy policy in Website → Pages.
10. **Languages.** Enable *multi language* if you offer several languages - see languages.

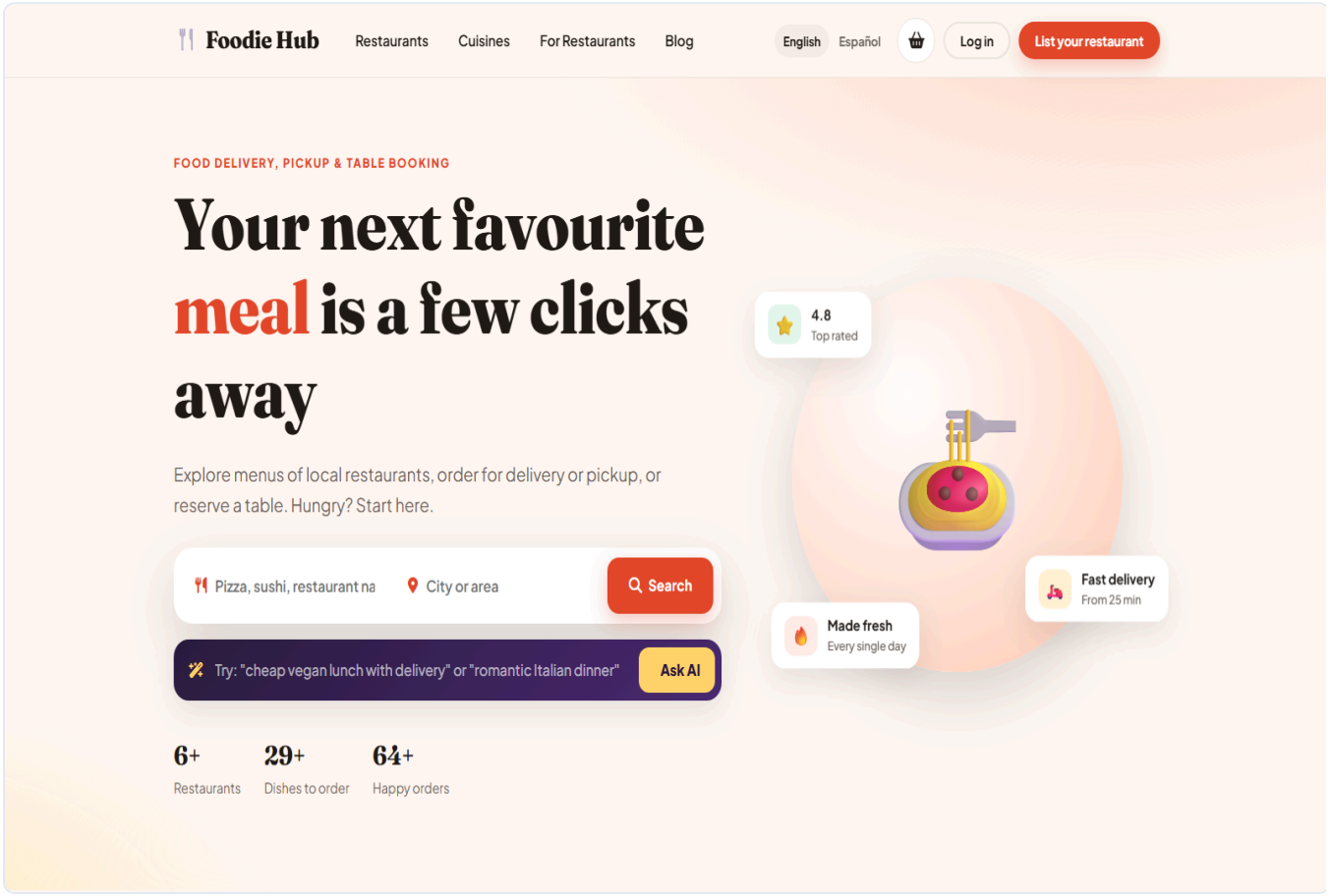
11. **SEO and tracking.** Add your Google Analytics ID in SEO and tracking, and enable SEO URLs when mod_rewrite works.
12. **Test the whole flow.** Register a test restaurant, add a dish, place a cash order as a customer and process it in the owner panel.
13. **Go live.** Turn on *Allow restaurants to register* and tell restaurants about your marketplace.

Use the demo data of the installer to look around, then remove the demo restaurants in **Restaurants → All restaurants** before you launch.

WEBSITE (FRONT END)

Home page and restaurant search

The home page is designed to get a hungry visitor to a restaurant in a few seconds: a large search box, popular cuisines, featured restaurants and a short explanation of how ordering works.

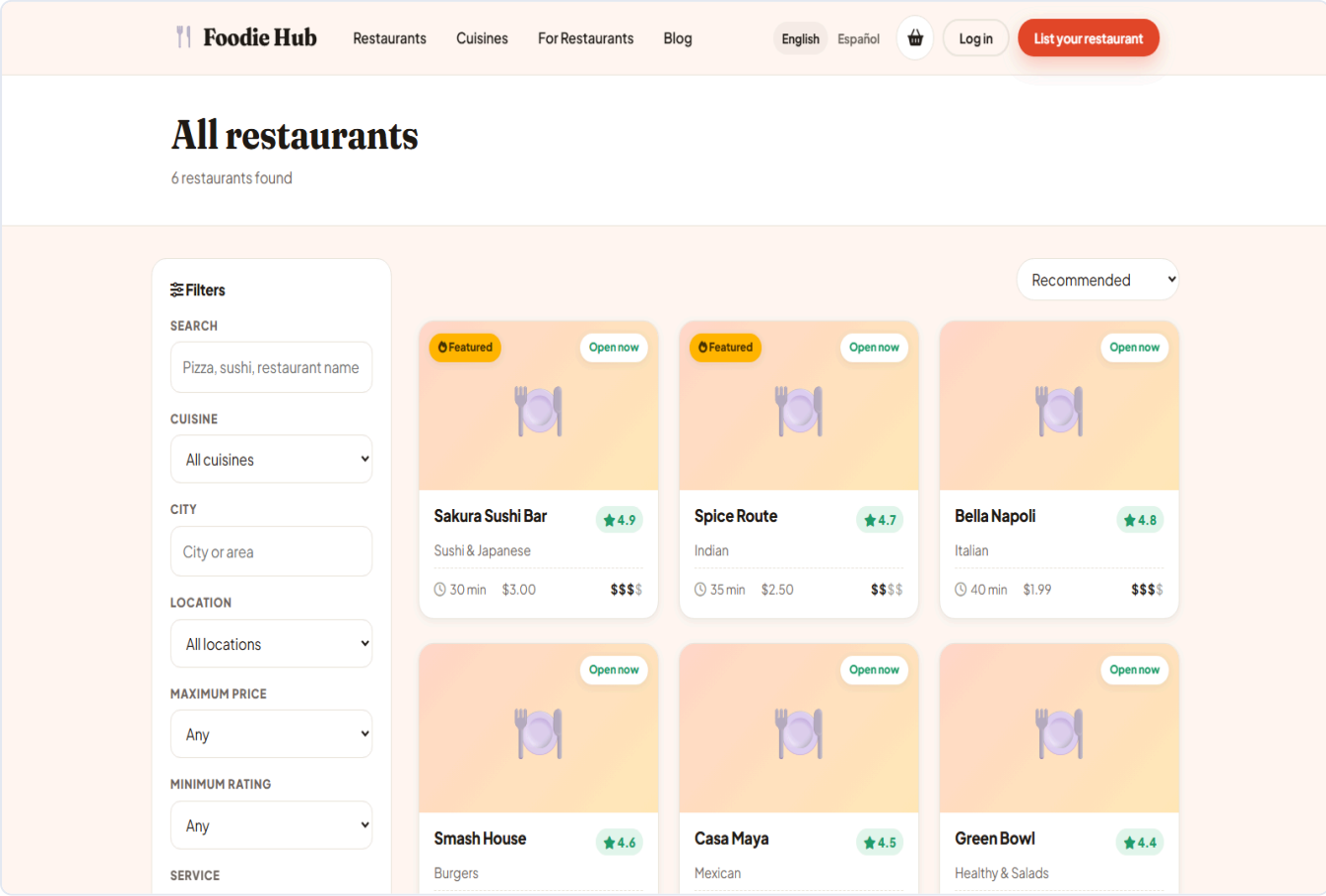


Home page with search box, AI search bar and live statistics

What the home page contains

- **Search box** - type a dish, cuisine or restaurant name and optionally a city or area.
- **AI search bar** - ask in your own words, see AI search.
- **Statistics** - number of restaurants, dishes and orders.
- **Browse by cuisine** - tiles for every active cuisine you created in the admin panel.
- **Popular restaurants** - featured restaurants first, then the best rated.
- **How it works, blog and a call to action** for restaurants that want to join.

The search results page



Search results with the filter panel on the left

Open **Restaurants** in the menu to see every restaurant. The filter panel narrows the list:

Filter	What it does
Search	Matches restaurant names, descriptions and dish names.
Cuisine	Italian, Burgers, Sushi and so on - the list comes from the admin panel.
City and Location	Free text for the city, and the location tree of your `locations` file.
Maximum price	The price level of the restaurant ($ to $$$$).
Minimum rating	Shows only well-reviewed restaurants.
Service	Delivery or pickup.

Results can be sorted by *Recommended*, *Top rated*, *Fastest delivery*, *Lowest delivery fee*, *Newest* or *Name A-Z*. Every card shows the cover photo, name, cuisine, rating, delivery time, delivery fee, price level and a badge: *Featured*, *Open now* or *Closed now*.

Browse by cuisine

The **Cuisines** page shows every cuisine with an icon and the number of restaurants. Clicking one opens the search results already filtered. You manage cuisines in Restaurants → Cuisines.

Mobile and desktop

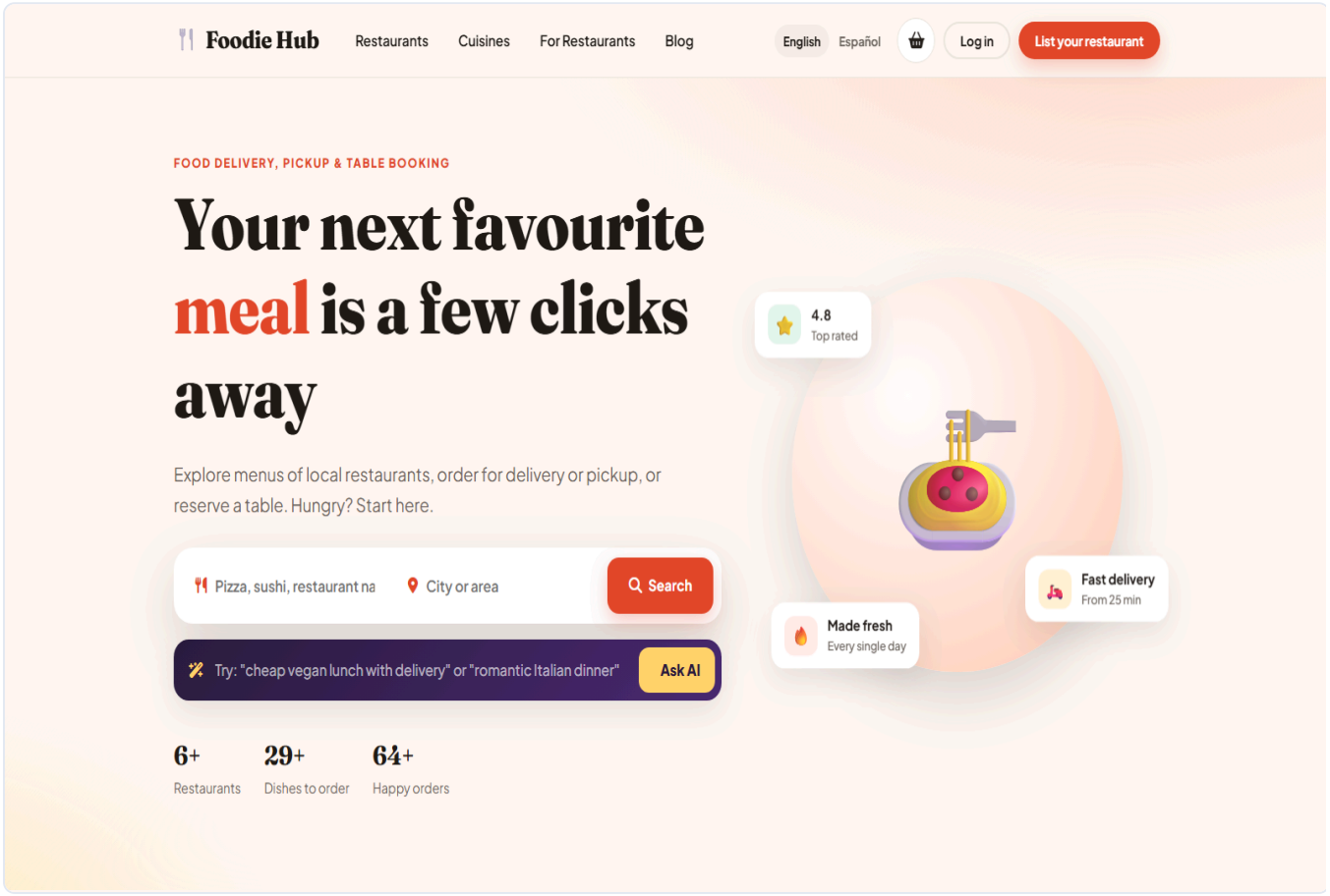
The design is mobile first: on a phone the menu becomes a drawer, filters stack above the results and a floating basket button keeps the order one tap away.

Restaurants marked **Featured** in the admin panel (or through a featured plan) are shown first on the home page and at the top of search results - a good extra product to sell.

WEBSITE (FRONT END)

AI search: find food by describing it

Next to the normal search the home page has a purple **Ask AI** bar. Visitors write what they feel like in everyday language and the script converts it into the right filters - cuisine, price, delivery or pickup, vegan or vegetarian and more.



The "Ask AI" bar under the search box

Example questions

- "cheap vegan lunch with delivery"
- "romantic Italian dinner"
- "best rated sushi near me for pickup"
- "spicy food that is open now"

How it works

1. The visitor types a sentence and presses **Ask AI**.
2. The text is sent to the AI provider you configured, together with the list of your cuisines and locations.
3. The AI answers with structured filters, and the visitor lands on the normal search results page with those filters applied.

The AI never invents restaurants: it only chooses filters, so every result is a real restaurant from your database.

No AI key? It still works

If AI search is switched off or the provider is unavailable, the script falls back to a built-in keyword matcher that recognises cuisines, words such as *vegan*, *cheap*, *delivery* and *pickup*. The search box never shows an error to the visitor.

Turn it on or off

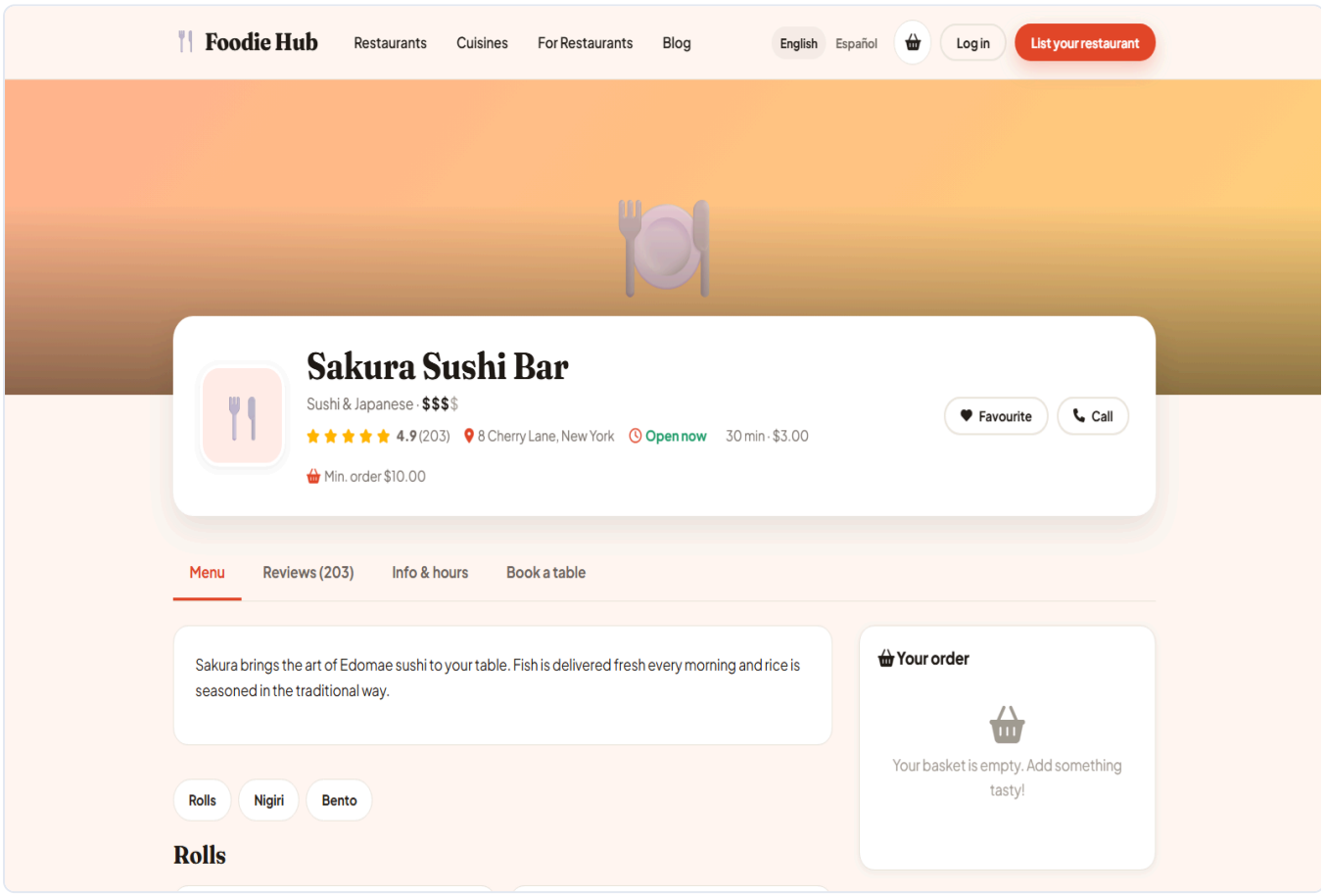
In the admin panel open Settings → Artificial intelligence, enter your API key and use the *AI search on the front end* switch. Requests are rate limited per visitor to protect your budget.

> Groq, DeepSeek and ChatGPT use the same OpenAI-compatible interface, so you can switch providers at any time without changing anything else.

WEBSITE (FRONT END)

Restaurant page, menu and basket

Each restaurant has its own page that works as a mini website: a cover photo and logo, the key facts, an online menu and a basket that follows the visitor while they scroll.



A restaurant page with rating, price level, delivery time and tabs

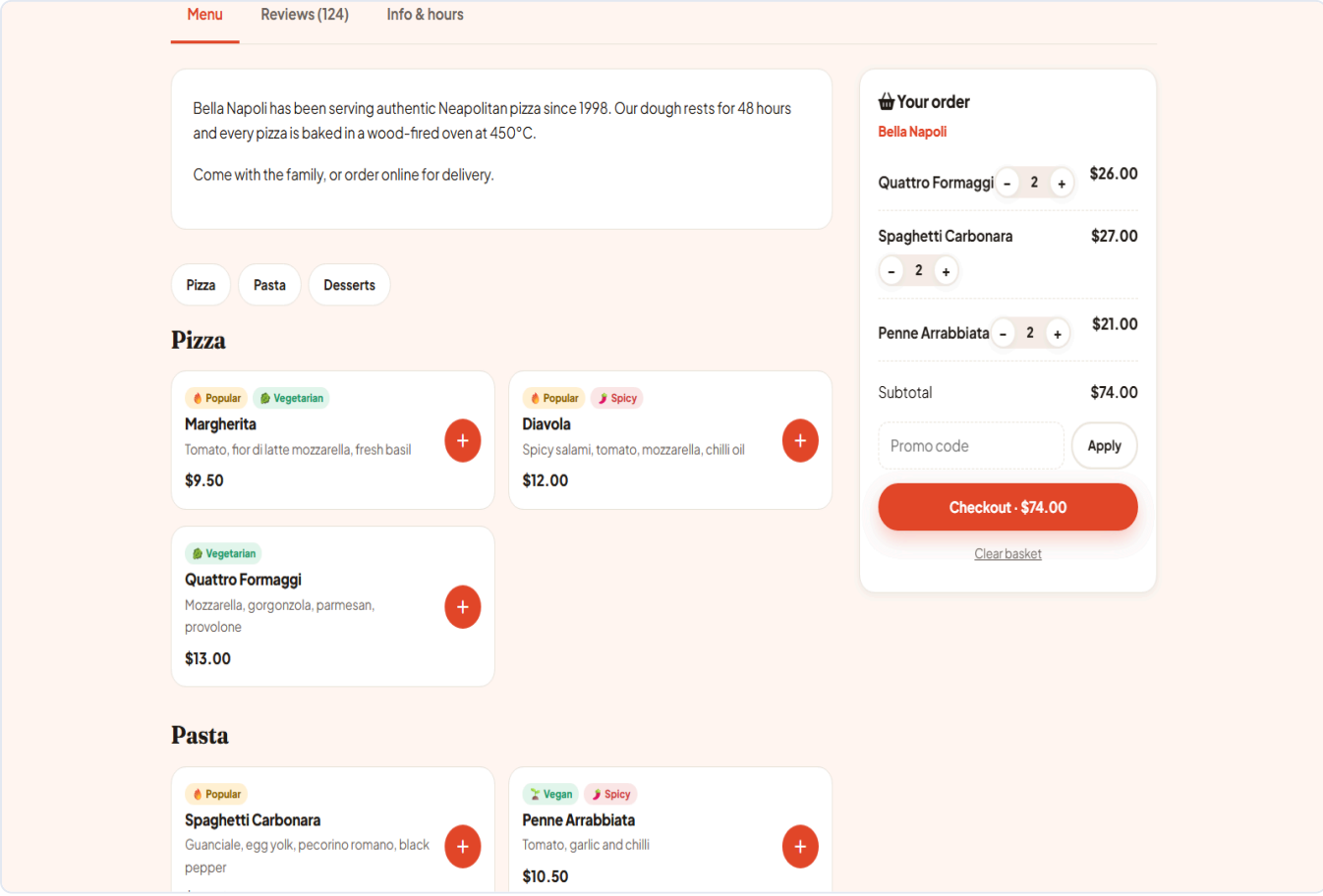
The header

The header shows the name, cuisine, price level, rating with the number of reviews, an **Open now / Closed now** badge (calculated from the opening hours), delivery time and delivery fee. Buttons let the visitor add the restaurant to their **Favourites**, call the restaurant or book a table.

The three tabs

- **Menu** - sections (Pizza, Pasta, Desserts...), dishes, prices and badges.
- **Reviews** - the average rating, all approved reviews and replies from the restaurant. See reviews.
- **Info and hours** - description, address with a map link, phone, and opening hours for every day.

The menu



Menu sections with dish badges and the live basket on the right

Dishes can carry badges: *Popular*, *Vegetarian*, *Vegan*, *Spicy*, *Gluten free (GF)*. A dish that the restaurant switched off shows as *Sold out*. A **+** button adds simple dishes straight to the basket. Dishes with options open a pop-up where the customer chooses, for example, a size (required) and extras such as cheese or bacon (optional). The price updates as the choices change, and a note field accepts special instructions like "no onions".

The basket

- The basket updates instantly, without reloading the page.
- Quantities can be changed with **-** and **+**; the line disappears at zero.
- A basket holds dishes of **one restaurant**. Adding a dish from another restaurant asks whether to start a new basket.
- The restaurant's **minimum order** and its **free delivery over** amount are shown and enforced.
- A **promo code** field applies the restaurant's discount codes (see promo codes).
- On phones a floating basket button opens the basket.

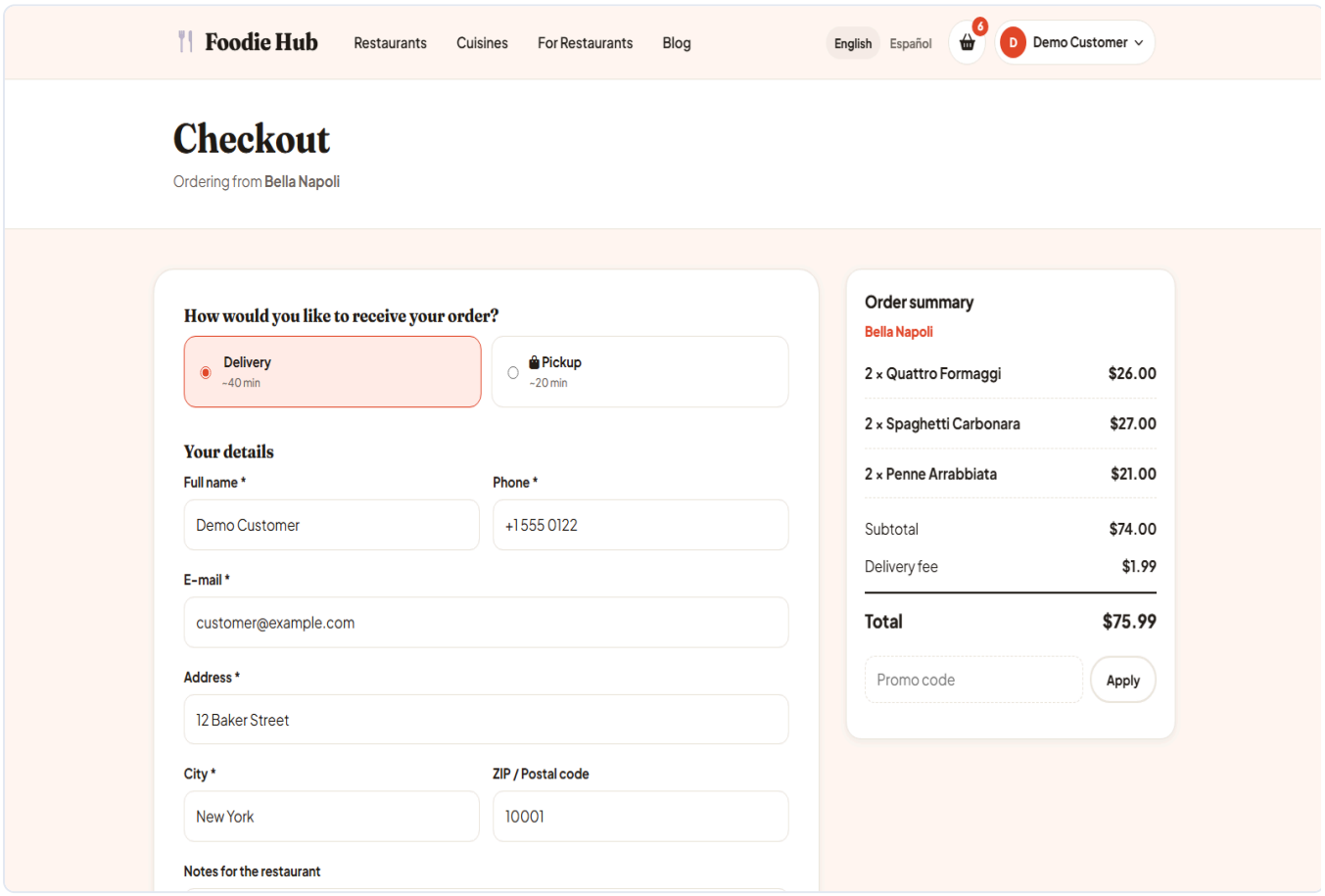
When the basket is ready, the **Checkout** button continues to the checkout page.

Online ordering can be turned off for a single restaurant in its profile, or for the whole marketplace in configuration options. The menu is then shown for information only.

WEBSITE (FRONT END)

Checkout: delivery, pickup and payment

The checkout is a single, short page. It collects only what the restaurant needs to prepare and deliver the order.



The checkout page with delivery options, customer details and the order summary

Step by step

1. **Delivery or pickup.** Each option shows its estimated time. Pickup hides the address fields.
2. **Your details.** Name, phone and e-mail - already filled in for logged-in customers. For delivery the address, city and postal code are required.
3. **Notes for the restaurant.** Floor, door code, allergies.
4. **Tip.** Choose a percentage, enter your own amount, or leave no tip (you can switch tips off in Payments → Payment settings). Tips always go to the restaurant.
5. **Payment.** Pay in cash on delivery or pickup, or pay online with a card (and PayPal when enabled).
6. **Place order.** The customer sees the confirmation page and receives an e-mail.

The order summary

The right column lists every dish, the subtotal, the discount of a promo code, the delivery fee, the tip and the total. The **minimum order** of the restaurant is checked again on the server, so it cannot be bypassed.

Payment methods

Method	When it is offered
Cash on delivery / pickup	If the restaurant accepts cash.
Card (Stripe Checkout)	If Stripe is enabled and the restaurant accepts online payments. Supports cards, Apple Pay and Google Pay.
PayPal	If PayPal is enabled and the restaurant accepts online payments.

Online payments happen on the secure page of the payment provider. The customer returns to your site, where the script **verifies the payment with the provider** before marking the order as paid - the return link alone is never trusted.

Guest checkout

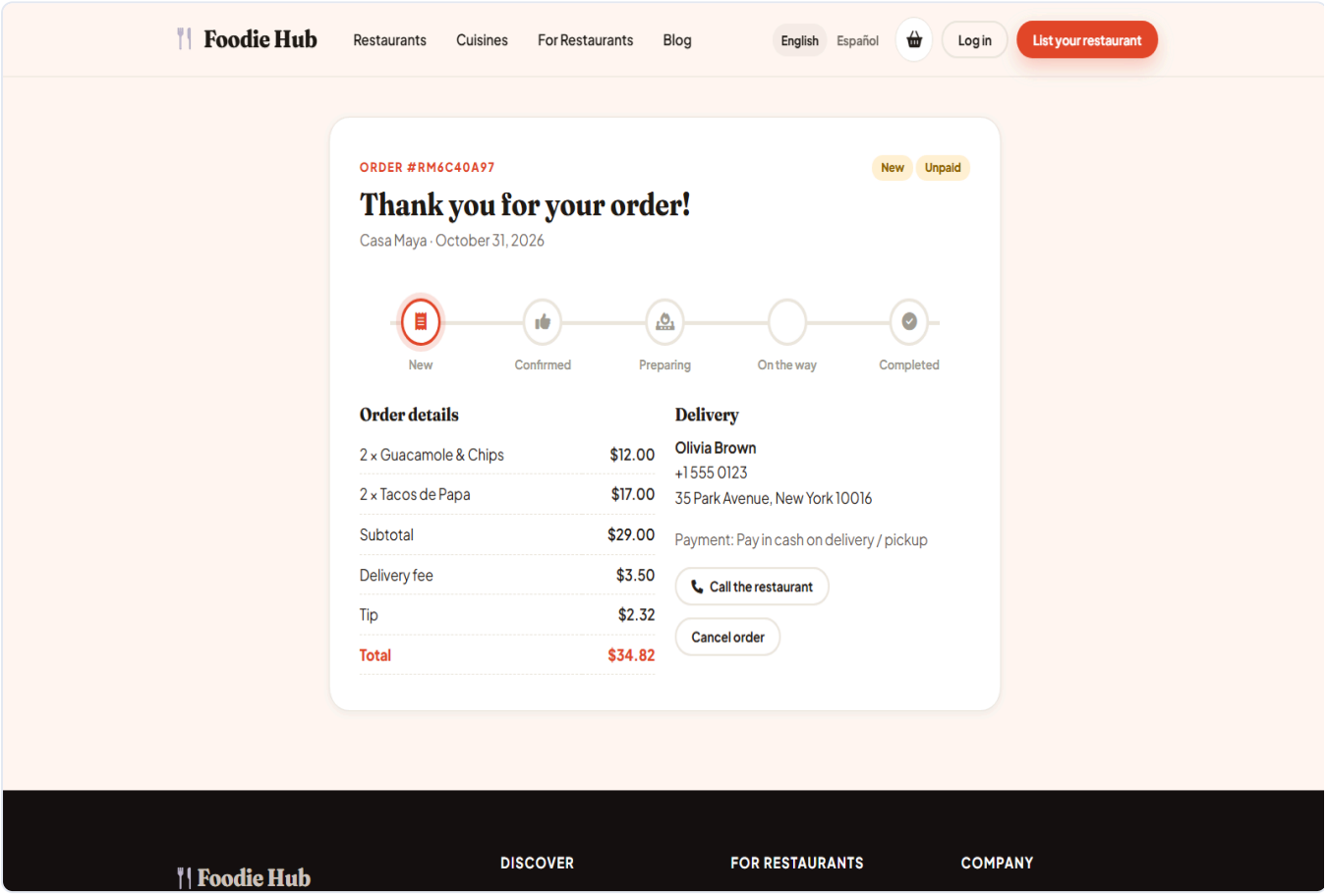
By default customers can order without creating an account; the order is tracked with a private link sent by e-mail. You can require an account by switching off *Guest checkout* in configuration options.

If the payment is interrupted, the order stays open and the order page shows a **Pay now** button, so the customer can finish paying without re-entering anything.

WEBSITE (FRONT END)

Order tracking and status e-mails

After the order is placed, the customer lands on a tracking page that stays available through a private link - no login required.



The order page with status, items and totals

What the order page shows

- The order reference and current status.
- The ordered dishes with options, the delivery or pickup details and the totals.
- The payment status: *Paid online*, *Unpaid* (cash) or *Awaiting payment*.
- Buttons: **Call the restaurant**, **Pay now** (unpaid online orders) and **Cancel order** (only while the order is still New and not paid online).

The order statuses

Status	Meaning
New	The order was placed and waits for the restaurant.
Confirmed	The restaurant accepted the order.
Preparing	The kitchen is working on it.

Ready	Ready for pickup.
On the way	Out for delivery.
Completed	Delivered or collected.
Cancelled	Cancelled by the customer or the restaurant.

The restaurant changes the status with one click in its orders screen, and the customer receives an e-mail every time.

E-mails that are sent

- Order confirmation to the customer, with the tracking link.
- New order notification to the restaurant.
- Status updates to the customer.
- Payment received confirmation.

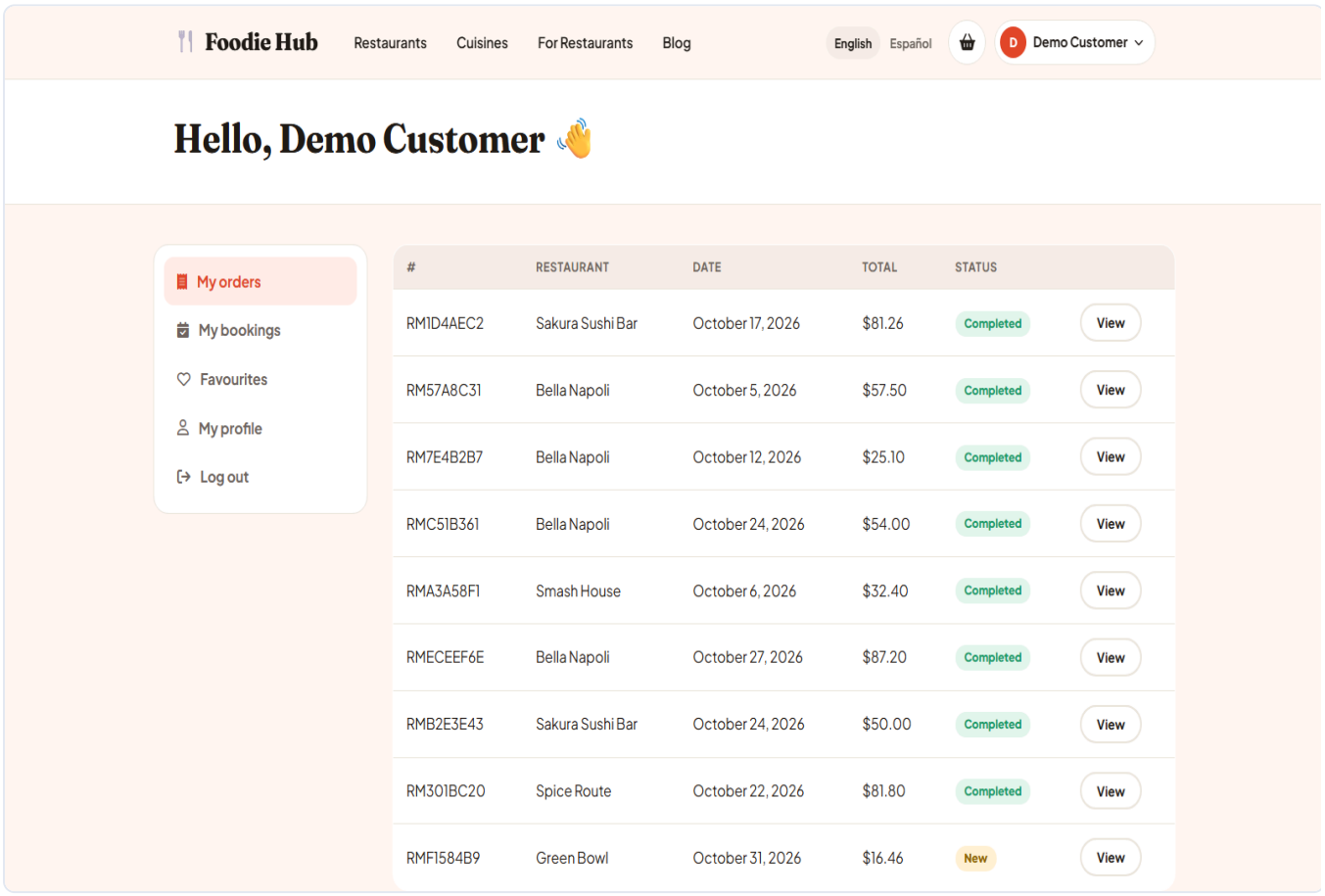
E-mails depend on a working mail setup. Enable SMTP and send a test e-mail in configuration options.

The tracking link contains a long secret token, so only the person who has the link can open the order.

WEBSITE (FRONT END)

Customer account

A free account makes ordering faster and lets customers come back to their history. Accounts are optional unless you switch off guest checkout.



The customer account page with order history

Register and log in

1. On the login page choose **I am hungry** (customer) and press *Sign up*.
2. Enter name, e-mail and a password of at least 6 characters, then confirm the password.
3. A welcome e-mail is sent and the customer can log in.

After eight wrong attempts the login is blocked for 10 minutes to stop password guessing.

Forgotten password

The *Forgotten password?* link sends an e-mail with a reset link. For privacy the page always says that a link was sent if the address is registered.

Inside the account

Section	Content
My orders	All orders with status and a link to the tracking page.

My bookings	Table booking requests and their status.
Favourites	Restaurants saved with the heart button.
My profile	Name, phone and default delivery address; change password.

Customers are listed in the admin panel under Users → Customers.

WEBSITE (FRONT END)

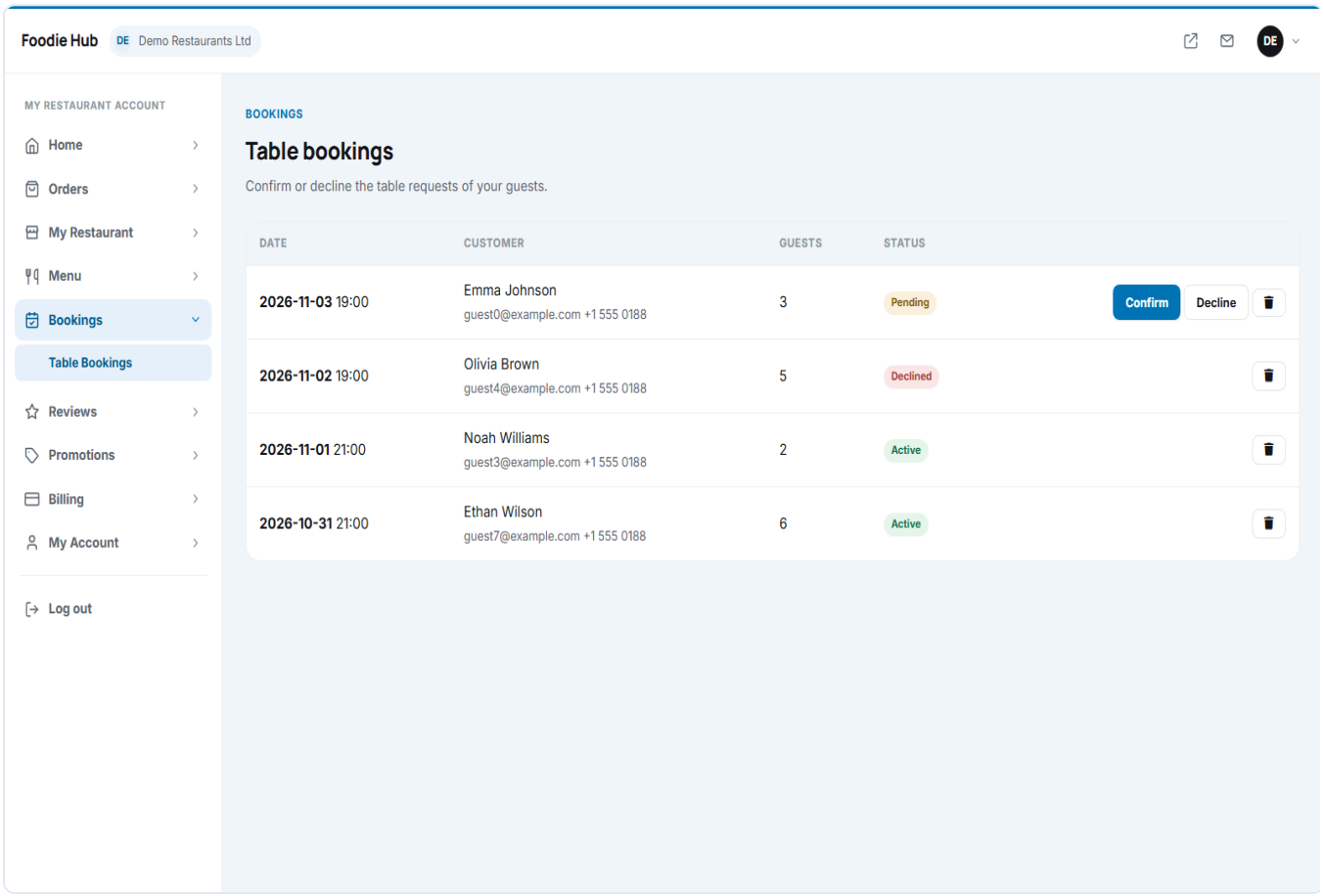
Table booking

Besides ordering food, every restaurant that enables bookings can receive table reservation requests.

For the diner

1. Open the restaurant page and press **Book a table**.
2. Choose the date, time and number of guests, enter name, phone and e-mail and add special requests (birthday, high chair…).
3. Press **Request booking**. The diner receives an e-mail that the request arrived.
4. When the restaurant answers, a second e-mail confirms or declines the table.

For the restaurant



Booking requests in the restaurant owner panel

Requests appear in Bookings → Table bookings with a **Confirm** and a **Decline** button. The restaurant also gets an e-mail for every new request.

Switching bookings on and off

- A restaurant turns bookings on or off with *Accept table bookings* in its profile.

- You can disable the feature for the whole marketplace with *Enable table bookings* in configuration options.
- You see all bookings in **Restaurants** → **Bookings** in the admin panel.

WEBSITE (FRONT END)

Reviews, ratings and favourites

Reviews build trust and drive orders. The script calculates the average rating of every restaurant and uses it for the stars, the filters and the sorting.

Writing a review

1. The customer opens the **Reviews** tab of a restaurant and chooses a star rating from 1 to 5.
2. Optionally adds a title and a comment and presses **Submit review**.
3. A customer can review each restaurant once.

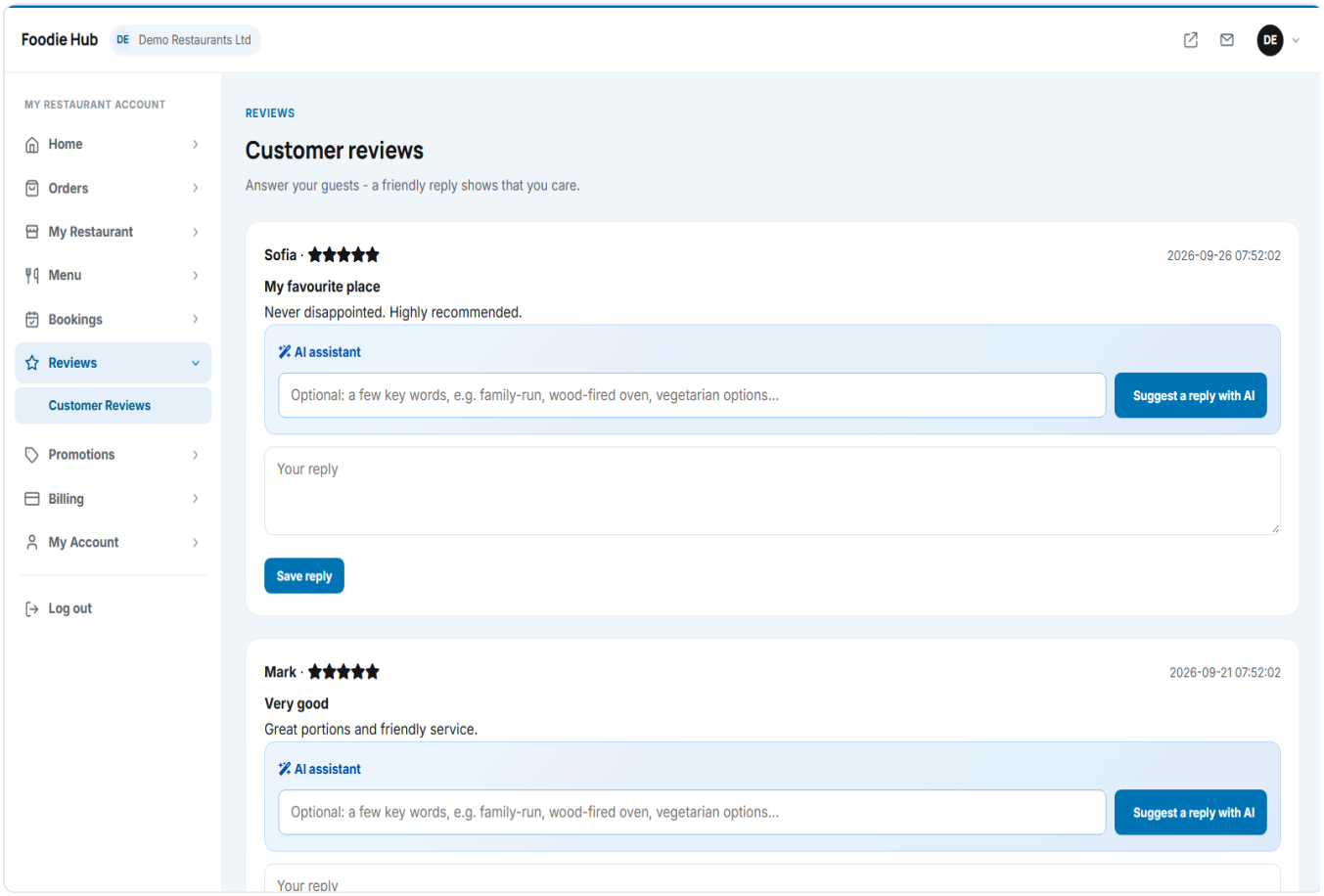
If *Automatically approve reviews* is on in configuration options the review appears at once; otherwise it waits in **Restaurants → Reviews** until you approve it.

Replies from the restaurant

The restaurant owner answers each review in the owner panel; the reply is shown under the review as *Reply from the restaurant*. An AI button suggests a friendly reply.

Favourites

The heart button on a restaurant page saves it to the customer's *Favourites* in the account area. Visitors who are not logged in are asked to log in first.



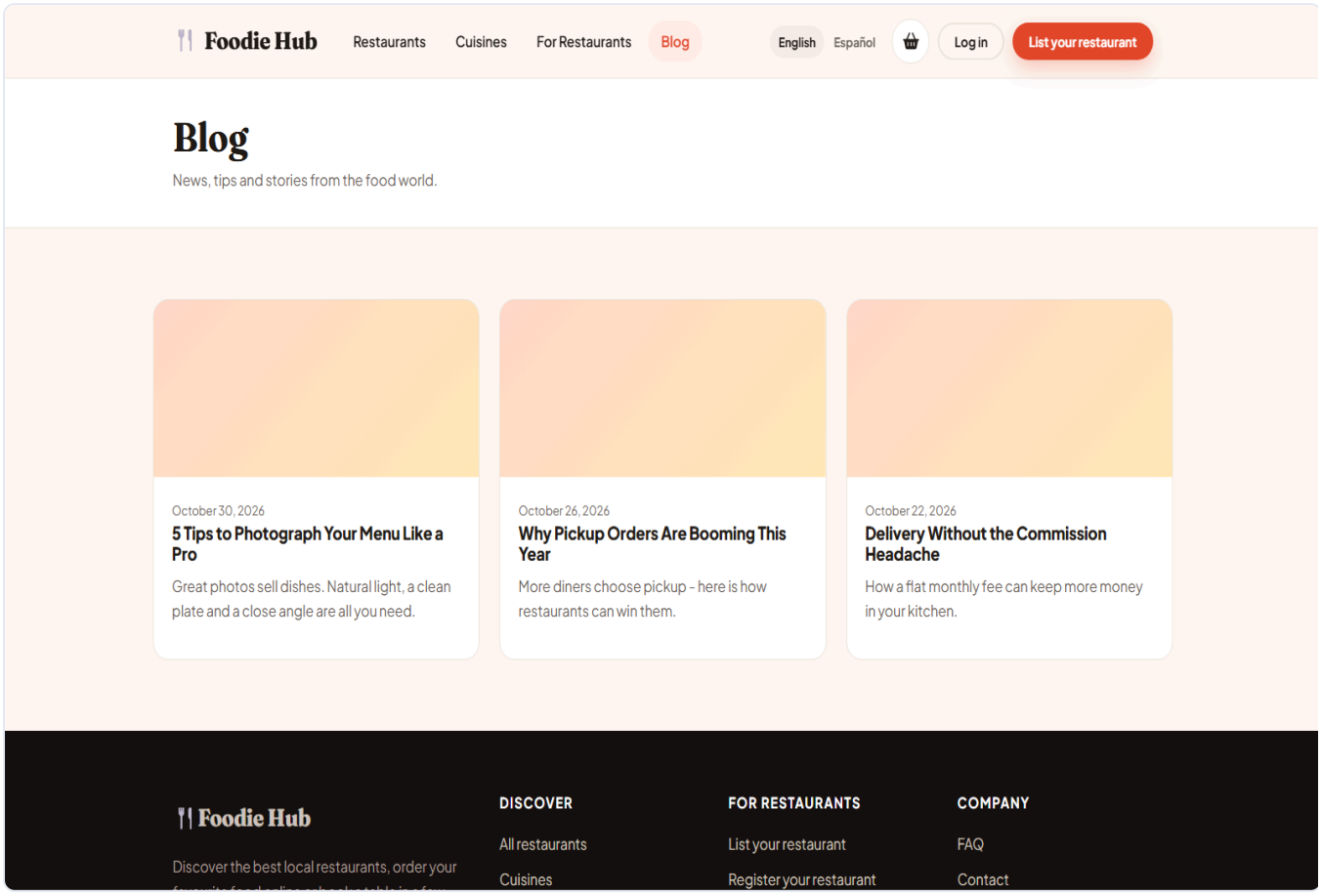
Reviews with the reply box in the owner panel

WEBSITE (FRONT END)

Blog, FAQ, contact and information pages

Besides restaurants, the website has content pages that help with trust and with search-engine traffic. All of them are edited in the admin panel without touching code.

Blog



The blog page

Articles appear on the **Blog** page and the latest ones on the home page. They are managed in Website → News, and an AI button can draft an article for you.

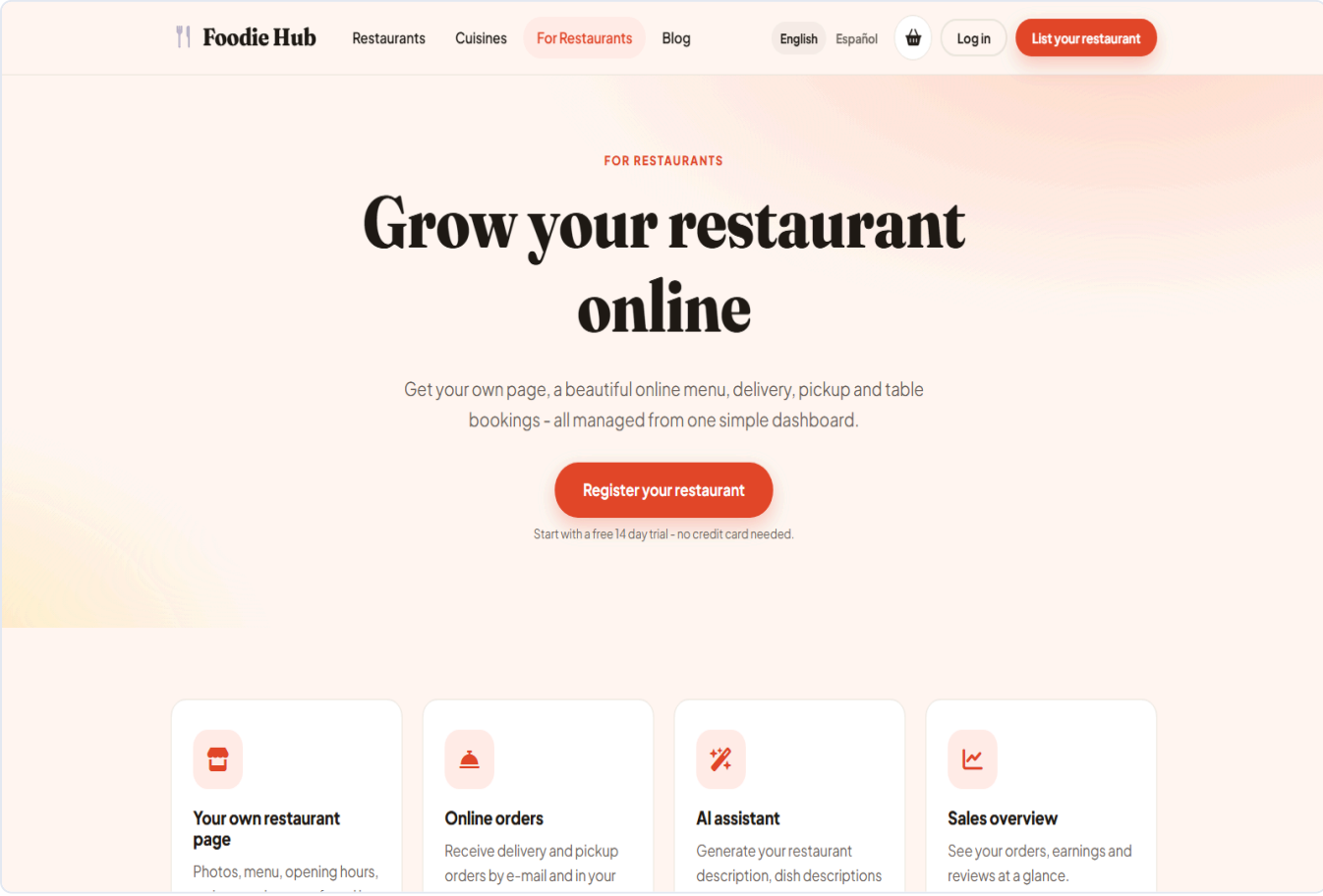
FAQ

The FAQ page has two groups - questions for customers and questions for restaurants. You edit them in **Website → FAQ**.

Contact

The contact form stores messages in the admin panel (**Home → Messages**) and sends them to the administrator e-mail. A short delay between messages stops spam.

"For restaurants" page



The page that invites restaurants to join, with pricing

This page explains the benefits for restaurants and shows your pricing. It adapts to your charging mode: a monthly price list in mode 1, "pay only when you earn" with your commission percentage in modes 2 and 3. The button leads to the restaurant registration.

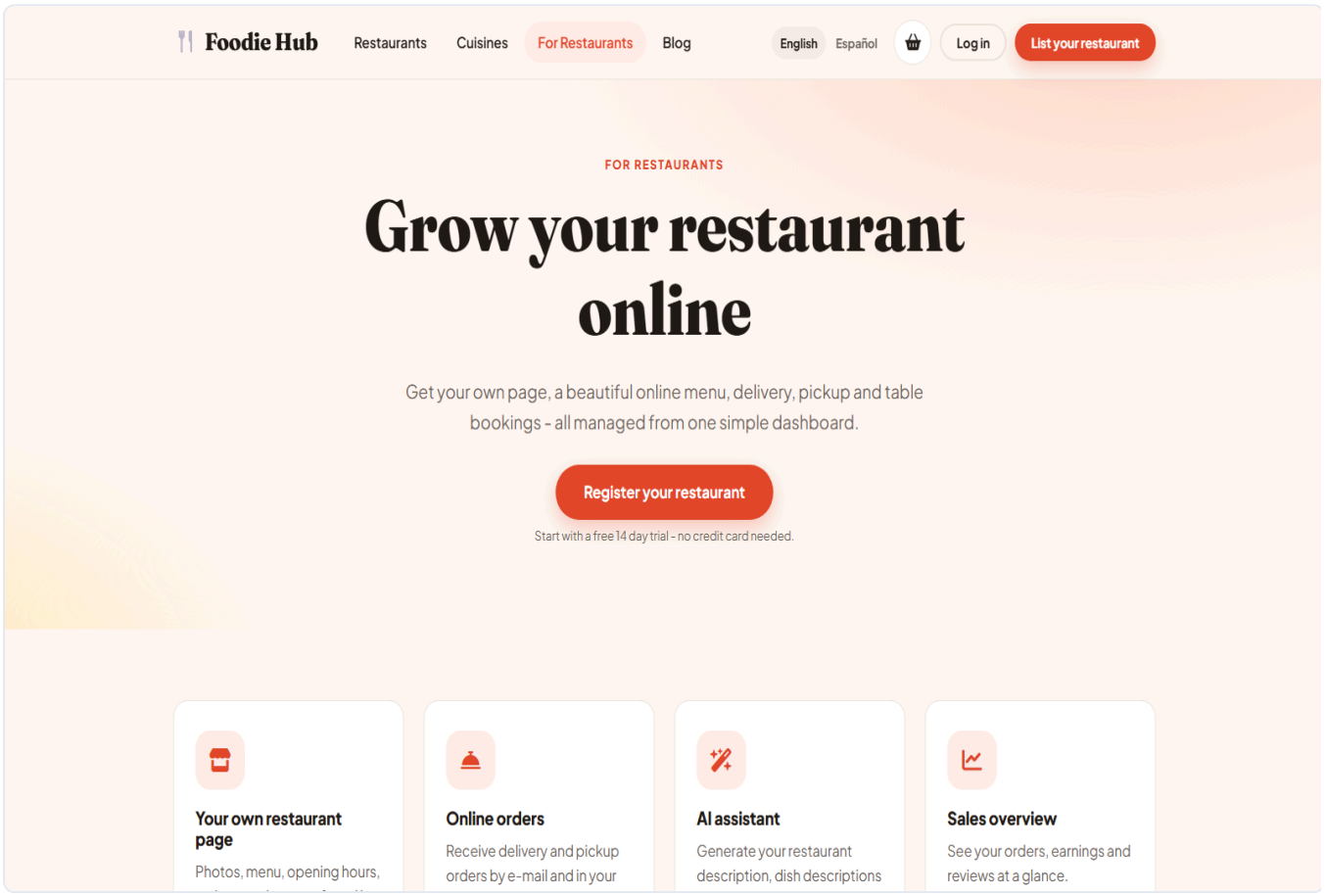
About us, Terms and Privacy

These pages are created by the installer with placeholder text. Replace them with your own in **Website** → **Pages**; the registration forms link to the Terms page.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

Restaurant registration and approval

Restaurants register themselves. You decide whether they go live at once or only after your approval, and whether they get a free trial.



The "for restaurants" page invites owners to register

The registration steps

1. The owner opens **List your restaurant** (or *Register your restaurant*) on the website.
2. Enters the restaurant name, their own name, e-mail, phone and a password, and accepts the Terms.
3. The account and the first restaurant are created. If you use subscriptions and a free trial, the trial starts immediately - the form says "Start with a free 14 day trial - no credit card needed" (the number of days is yours to set).
4. A welcome e-mail with a link to the owner panel is sent, and you receive a notification e-mail.

Approval

In configuration options the switch **Automatically approve restaurants** decides what happens next:

Setting	Result
On	The restaurant is *Active* and visible on the website straight away.

Off (default)	The restaurant is *Pending*. The owner sees a notice in the dashboard. You approve it in Restaurants → All restaurants and the owner gets an e-mail "Your restaurant was approved".

Closing registration

Switch off **Allow restaurants to register** in the same settings page if you prefer to add restaurants yourself. The form then shows that registration is closed. You can create owners and restaurants from the admin panel.

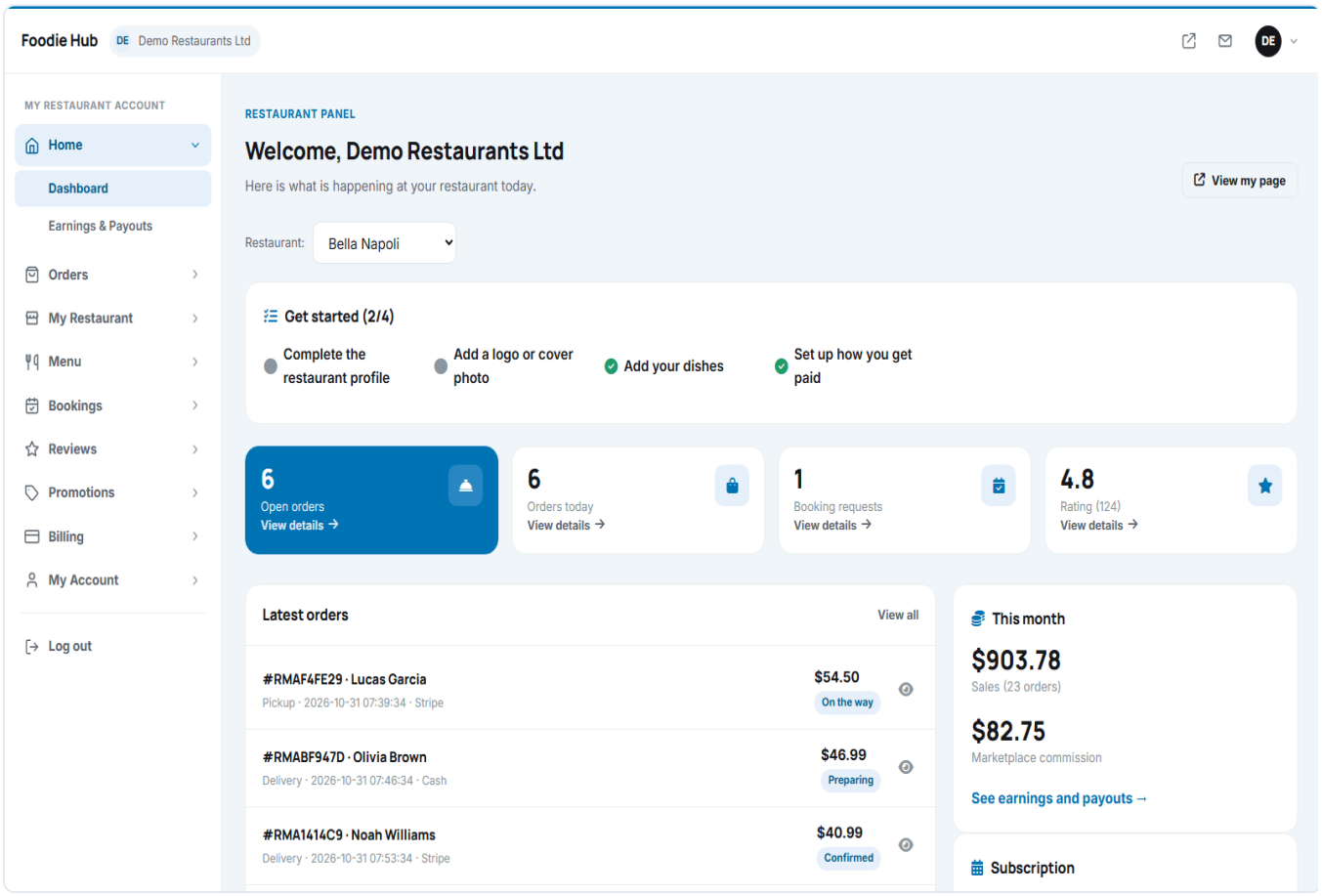
Logging in

Owners log in at `/user_admin/` or from the website's login page by choosing **I own a restaurant**. The same login works on both.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

The restaurant owner dashboard

The owner panel at `/user_admin/` uses the same clean admin design as the main panel. The dashboard is the first thing a restaurant sees after logging in.



Owner dashboard with statistics, latest orders and monthly sales

What you see

- **Restaurant switcher** - owners with several restaurants choose which one they are working on.
- **Get started checklist** - complete the profile, add a logo or cover photo, add dishes, set up how you get paid. Finished steps get a green tick.
- **Statistic tiles** - open orders, orders today, booking requests and the rating with the number of reviews.
- **Latest orders** with amount, payment method and status.
- **This month** - sales, number of orders and the marketplace commission, with a link to earnings and payouts.
- **Subscription** - the current plan and its end date, or the commission rate, depending on your charging mode.

Notices

- **Waiting for approval** - the restaurant is not visible yet.

- **Suspended** - the administrator hid the restaurant.
- **Subscription not active** - the restaurant is hidden and cannot receive orders until the plan is renewed (Plans).

The menu on the left

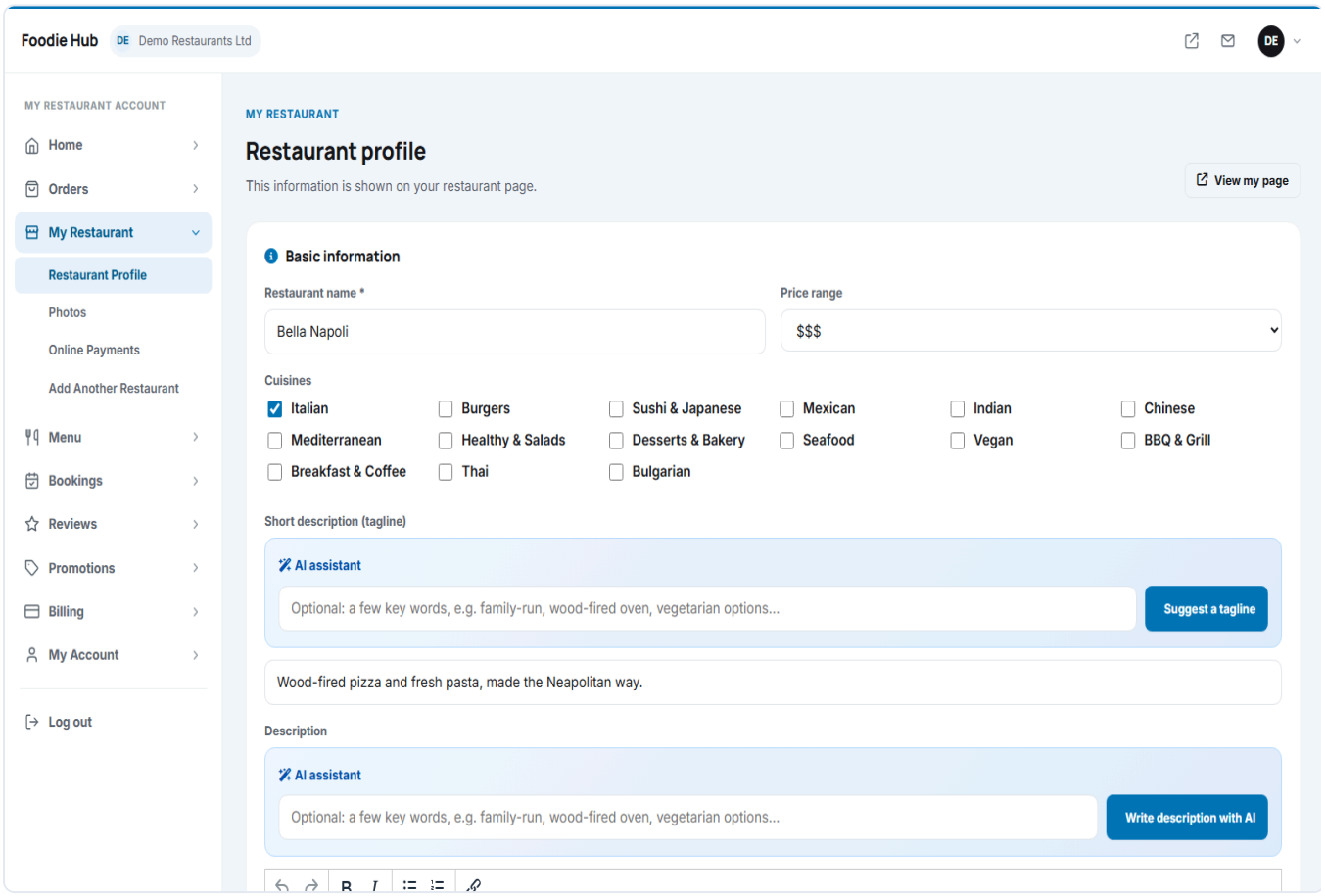
Item	Page
Home	Dashboard, Earnings and payouts
Orders	Active orders and order history
My restaurant	Profile, photos, online payments, add another restaurant
Menu	Dishes and sections, AI menu import
Bookings, Reviews, Promotions	Bookings, reviews, promo codes
Billing	Plans and payment history
My account	Contact details and password

The panel is fully responsive, so orders can be handled from a phone or tablet in the kitchen.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

Restaurant profile, hours and photos

The profile in **My restaurant → Restaurant profile** controls everything visitors see on the restaurant page.



Restaurant profile with the AI assistant above the description editor

Basic information

- **Name** and the **short description** (tagline) shown on the cards in search results.
- **Price range** from $ to $$$$.
- **Cuisines** - tick one or more.
- **Description** - formatted text with an editor.

Write the description with AI

Above the editor there is a blue **AI assistant** box. Optionally type a few key words ("family-run, wood-fired oven, vegetarian options") and press **Generate with AI**. A complete description appears in the editor - read it, edit it and save. The same box can suggest a tagline. The buttons appear only when the administrator has enabled AI (AI settings).

Contact and location

Address, city, postal code, the **location** from your location list, phone, e-mail, website and optional latitude / longitude for the map link.

Ordering and delivery

Option	Meaning
Accept online orders	Shows the basket and checkout on the restaurant page.
Accept table bookings	Shows the *Book a table* button.
Delivery / pickup	Which services the restaurant offers.
Delivery fee, free delivery over, minimum order	Money rules applied in the basket and checkout.
Delivery time, pickup time	Estimated minutes shown to customers.
Accept cash / accept online payments	Which payment methods customers can choose.

Opening hours

Set opening and closing times for every weekday, or mark a day as closed. The *Open now* badge is calculated from these hours.

Logo, cover and gallery

Upload a square **logo** and a wide **cover photo** in the profile, and more pictures in **My restaurant → Photos** (select several files at once). Images are automatically resized and re-encoded for fast loading and safety.

A restaurant with a cover photo, a good description and complete opening hours gets noticeably more orders. The dashboard checklist reminds owners of these steps.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

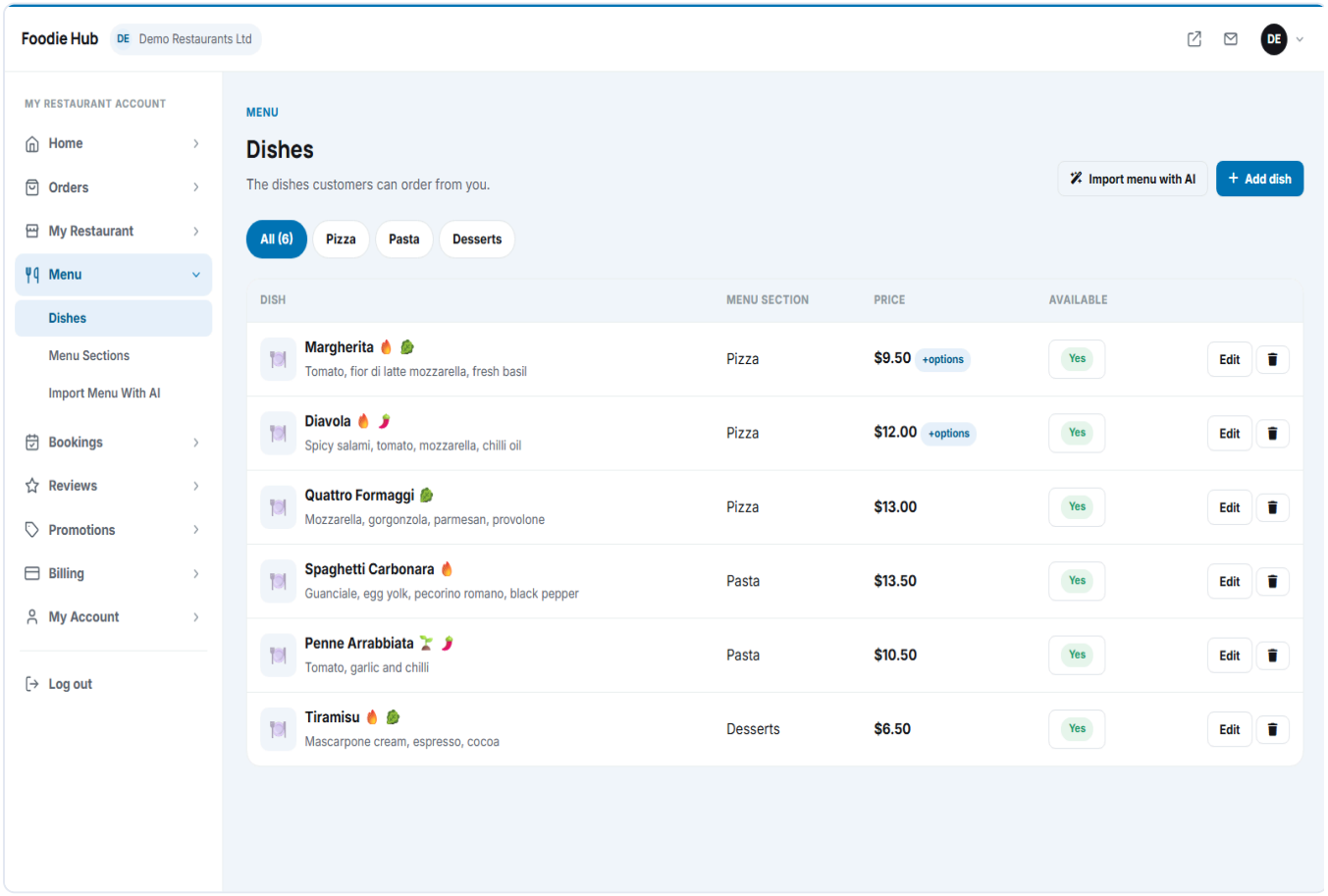
Menu: dishes, sections, options and extras

The menu is built from **sections** (Starters, Pizza, Desserts, Drinks) and **dishes** inside them.

1. Create the sections

Open **Menu** → **Menu sections** and add the first section. Sections can be reordered and renamed, and deleting a section also deletes its dishes (you are asked to confirm). You need at least one section before you can add a dish.

2. Add dishes



The list of dishes with sections, prices and availability

Press **Add dish** in **Menu** → **Dishes**. Fill in:

Field	Notes
Dish name and section	Required.
Price	Base price. Options can add to it.
Old price	Optional. Shown crossed out to advertise a discount.
Description	Press **Write with AI** to generate an appetising text from the dish name.

Photo	Shown on the dish card.
Badges	Vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, spicy, popular.
Available	Untick to show *Sold out* without deleting the dish.

3. Choices and extras (options)

Write one option group per line in the **Choices and extras** box. The group name comes first, then a colon, then the choices with their extra price separated by semicolons:

```
Size* : Small=0 ; Medium=2 ; Large=4
Extras : Cheese=1.5 ; Bacon=2 ; Olives=1
```

- A **star (*)** after the group name means the customer **must choose one** (like a size).
- Without a star customers may choose **several** (like extras) or none.
- The number after `=` is the extra price; use 0 for no extra charge.

The customer sees these groups in the pop-up of the dish, and the chosen options are printed on the order.

Plan limits

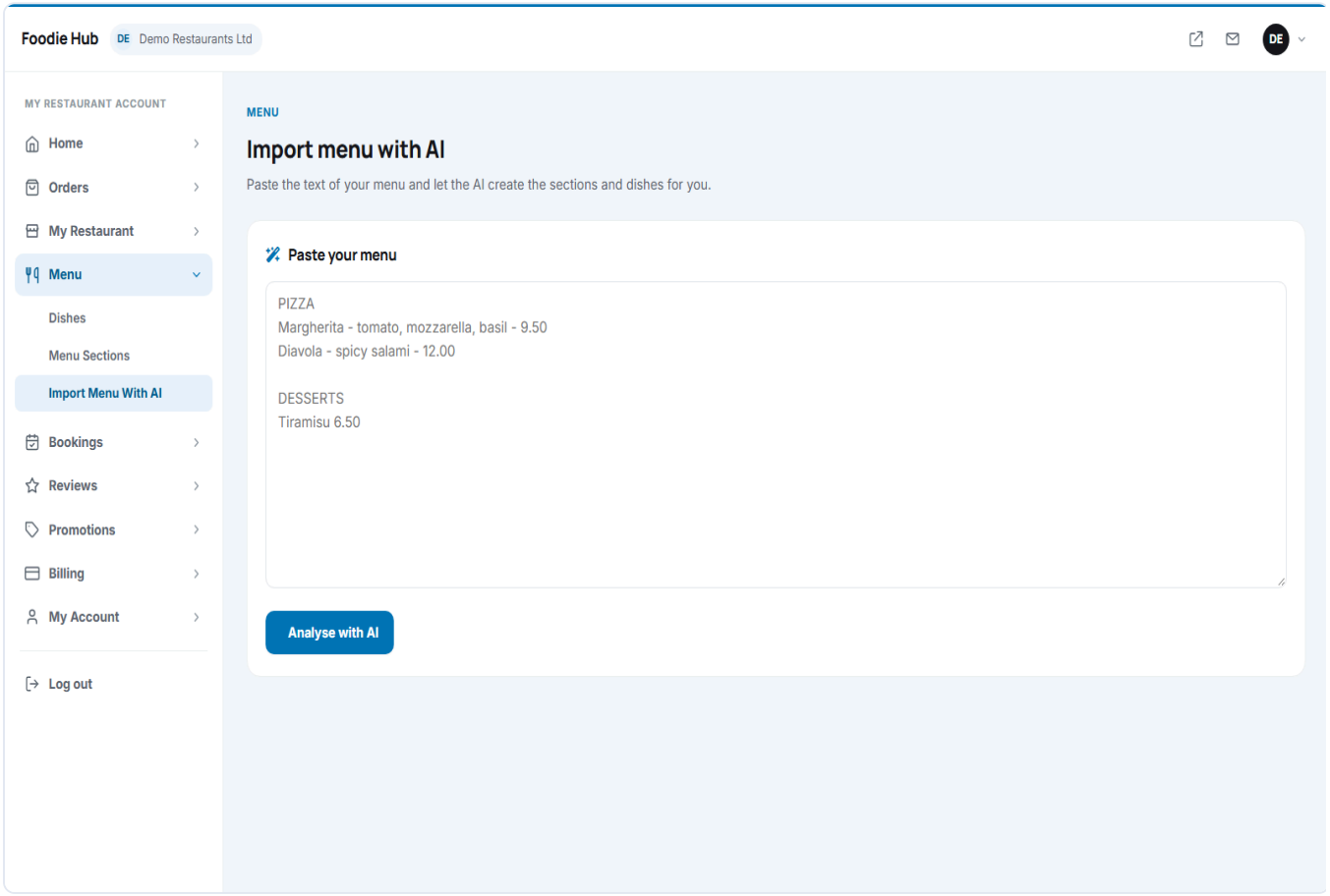
If your listing plan limits the number of dishes the page shows how many are used, for example "12 of 40 dishes used". Upgrade the plan in Billing to add more.

> Do not type a long menu dish by dish: use the AI menu import and then only fine-tune prices and options.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

Import a menu with AI

Typing a 60-dish menu takes hours. With **Menu → Import menu with AI** a restaurant pastes its menu text - from a PDF, a Word file or a website - and the AI turns it into sections and dishes.



Paste your menu and press Analyse with AI

How to use it

1. Copy the text of the menu and paste it into the large box. Any reasonable layout works - section titles in capitals, dish names, short descriptions and prices.
2. Press **Analyse with AI**. After a few seconds a preview lists every section and dish found, with name, description and price.
3. Check the preview. Fix anything that looks wrong - nothing is saved yet.
4. Press **Add these dishes to my menu**. The message "X dishes were added to your menu" confirms it.

Good to know

- Existing dishes are not deleted - imported dishes are added next to them.
- Plan limits on the number of dishes are respected.
- Options and extras are not guessed; add them afterwards in the dish editor.

- The feature needs AI to be switched on in the admin panel (*Menu dish descriptions and menu import* in AI settings). Without it the menu shows a notice instead.

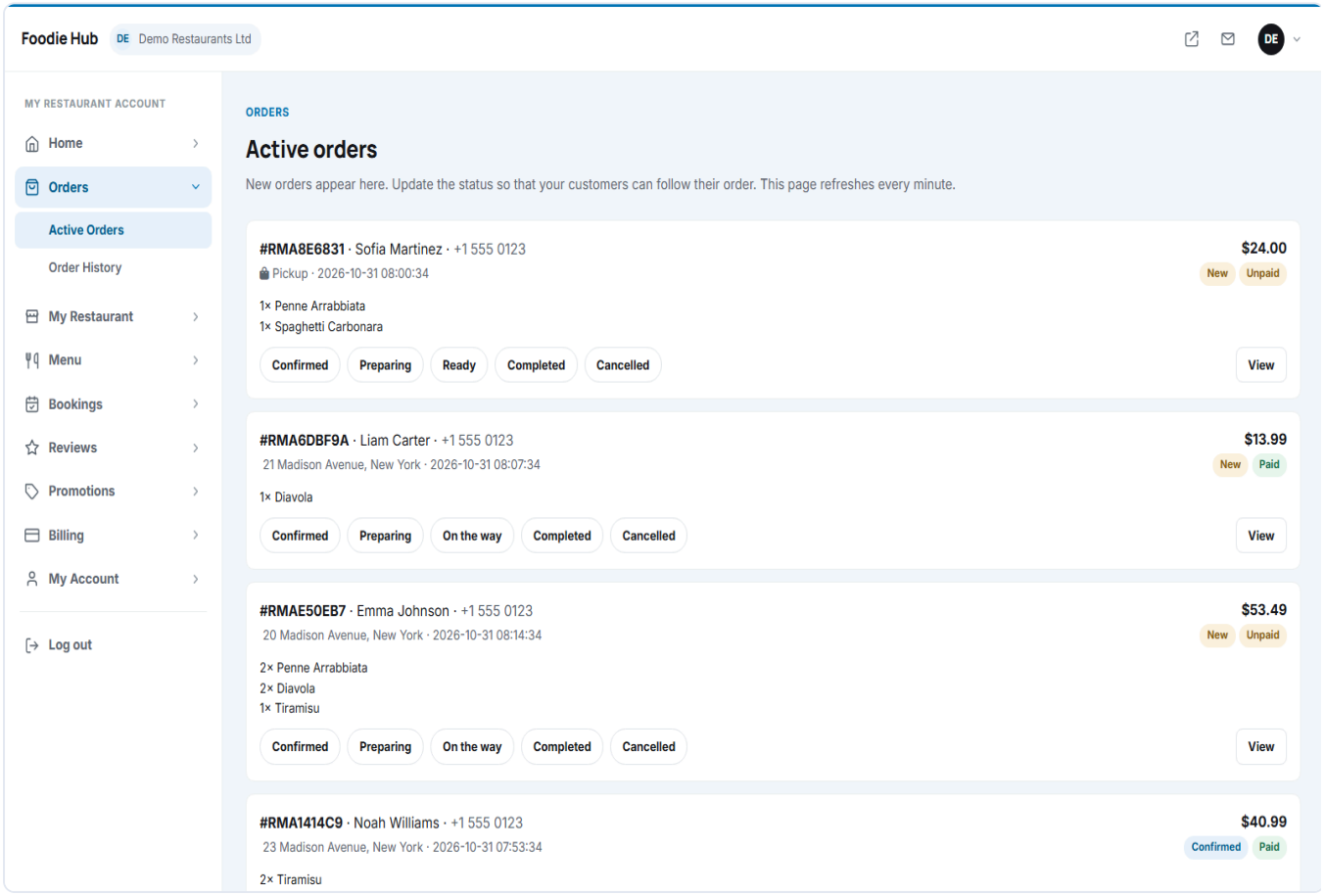
The AI reads only the text the owner pastes. Always double-check prices before publishing.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

Orders: live screen and history

The **Orders** menu is where a restaurant works all day.

Active orders



Active orders with one-click status buttons

Every new order appears at the top of **Orders** → **Active orders** with the customer, phone, address, the ordered dishes and options, the notes, the total and whether it is *Paid* or *Unpaid*. The page reloads itself every minute, so it can stay open on a tablet in the kitchen. The restaurant also receives an e-mail for each new order.

Updating the status

Press a status button: **Confirmed** → **Preparing** → **On the way** (delivery) or **Ready** (pickup) → **Completed**, or **Cancelled**. The customer gets an e-mail and sees the change on the tracking page. Completed and cancelled orders move to the history.

Order history

All orders of the restaurant, newest first, with filtering by status and a search box that finds an order by reference, customer name or e-mail. Open an order with **View** to see every detail, including how much the restaurant earns after commission.

Cash and online payments

- **Online paid** orders are marked as paid automatically after the provider confirms the payment.
- **Cash** orders are shown as unpaid and become paid automatically when the restaurant sets the order to Completed - the restaurant collects the money.
- Online orders whose payment has not been completed stay hidden from the restaurant until the customer pays.

Refunds

Refunds of online payments are made in the restaurant's own Stripe or PayPal account (or by the marketplace administrator when the marketplace collects the payments). Afterwards the order is marked as refunded so that the commission is not counted.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

Table bookings in the owner panel

Open **Bookings** → **Table bookings** to see the requests of your guests.

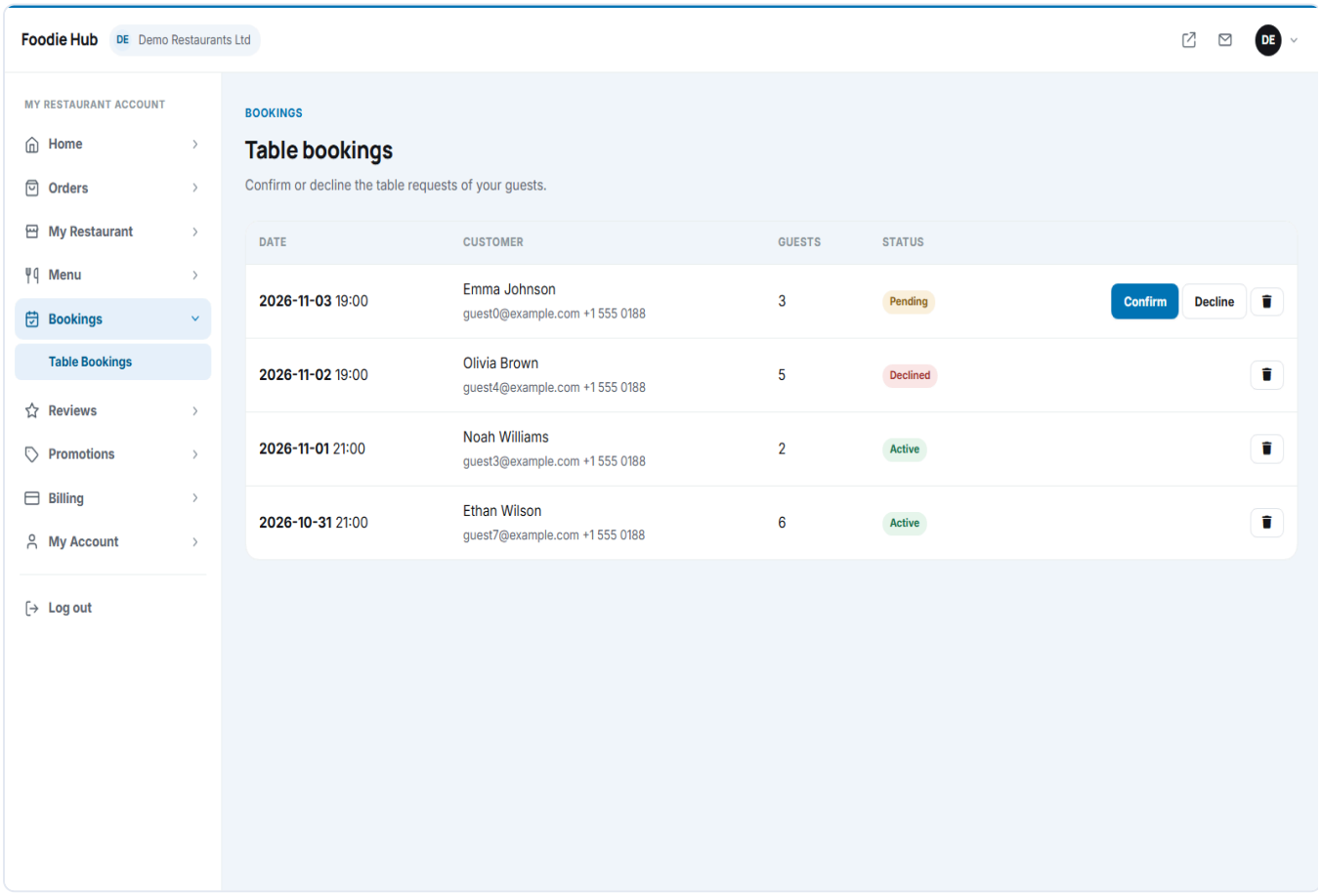


Table booking requests with confirm and decline buttons

What each request shows

Guest name, phone and e-mail, date, time, number of guests, special requests and the current status: *Pending*, *Confirmed* or *Declined*.

Answering a request

1. Check your capacity for that date and time.
2. Press **Confirm** or **Decline**.
3. The guest immediately receives an e-mail: a confirmation of the table, or a polite message that no table is available at that time and an invitation to try another time.

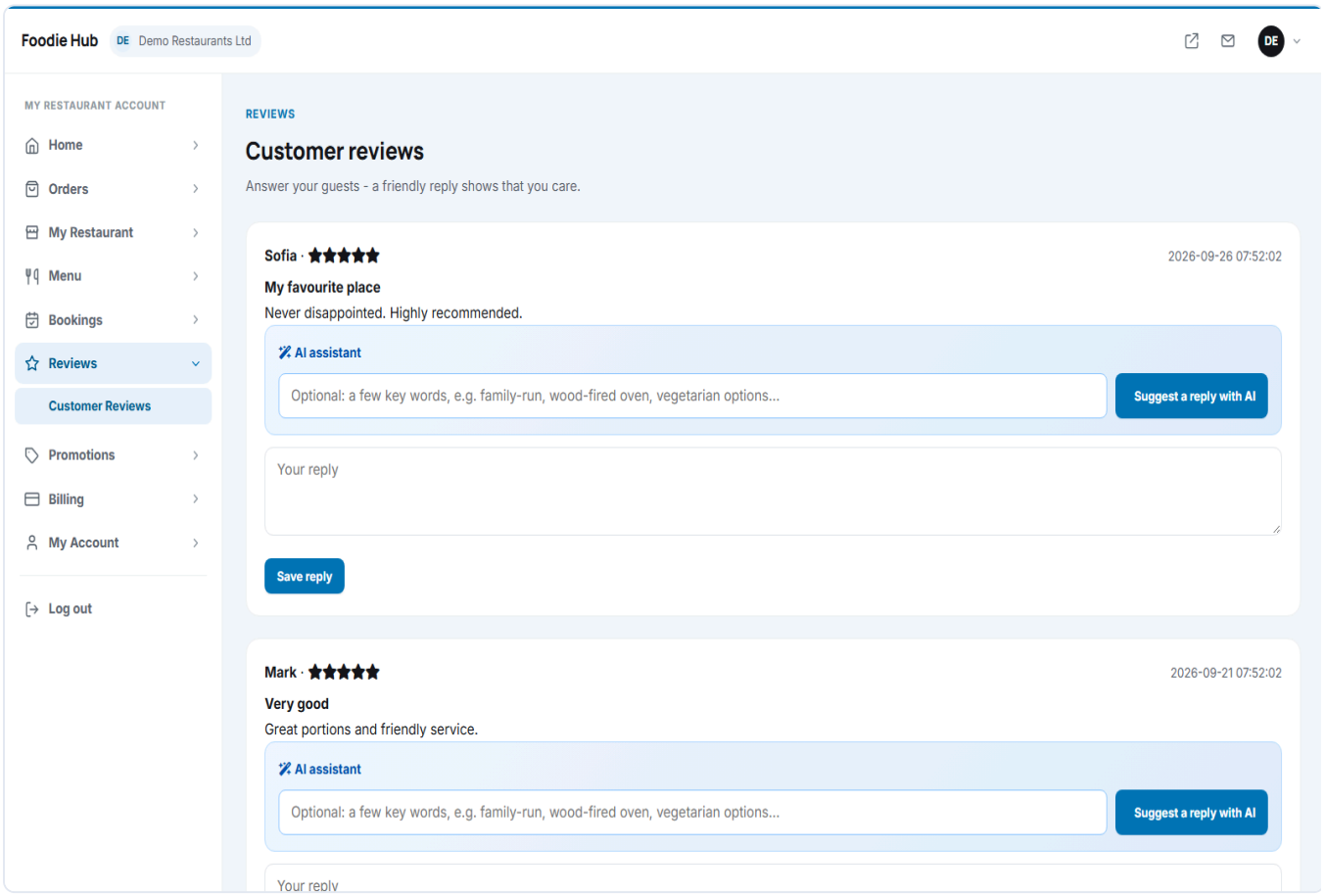
The dashboard tile **Booking requests** counts the requests that still wait for an answer.

Switch *Accept table bookings* off in the restaurant profile on days when you are fully booked.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

Customer reviews and replies

Replying to reviews shows future guests that the restaurant cares. **Reviews → Customer reviews** lists every review of your restaurant.



Reviews with a reply box and the AI suggestion button

Reply to a review

1. Read the review: stars, title, text and customer name.
2. Type your answer in the **Your reply** box, or press **Suggest a reply with AI** to get a polite draft.
3. Edit the draft and press **Save reply**.

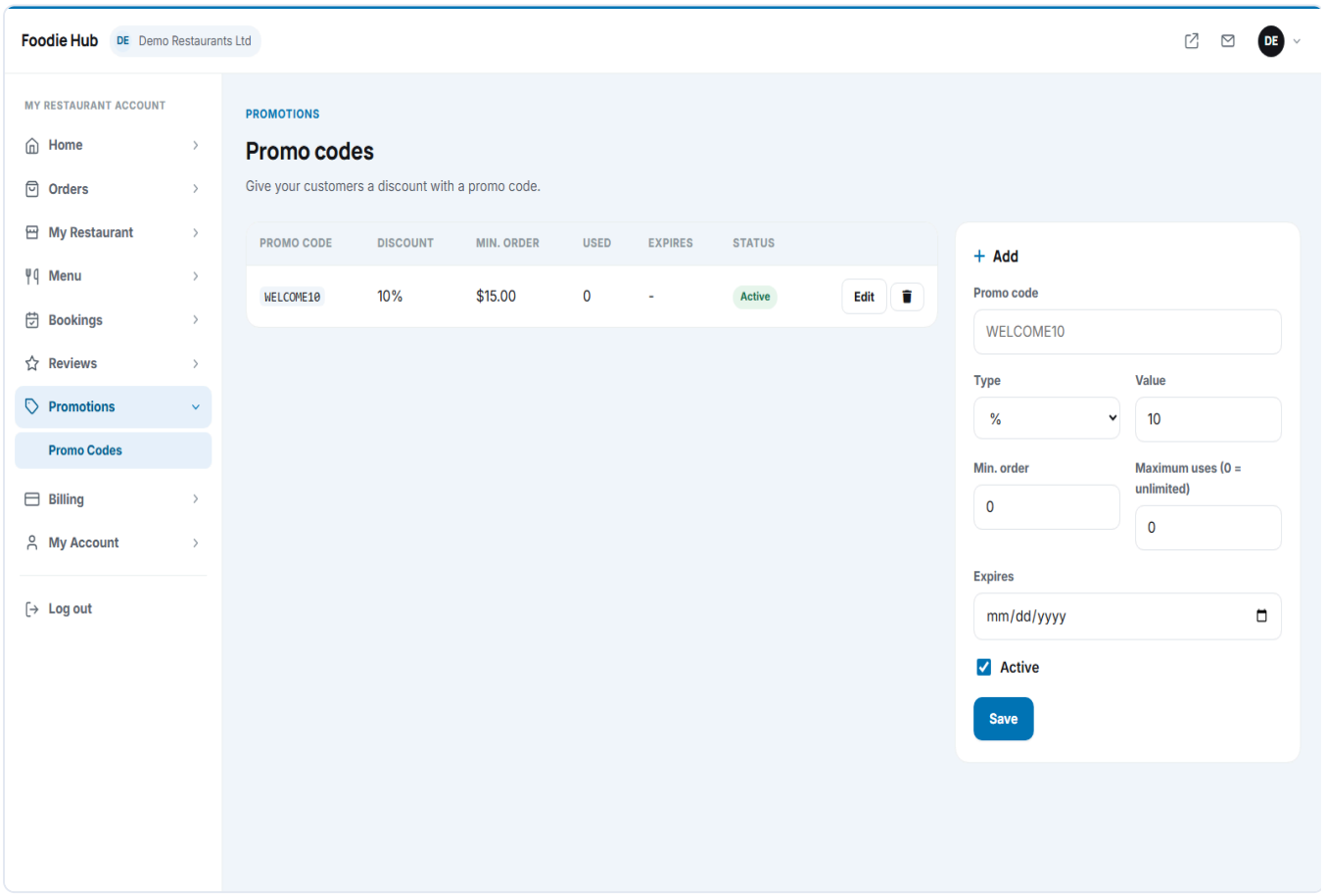
The reply appears under the review on the restaurant page as *Reply from the restaurant*.

Owners cannot delete or edit customer reviews. Reviews are moderated by the marketplace administrator in **Restaurants → Reviews**.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

Promo codes and discounts

Promo codes attract new customers and reward loyal ones. Manage them in **Promotions → Promo codes**.



The list of promo codes and the form to create one

Create a code

Field	Meaning
Code	What the customer types, for example `WELCOME10`. Codes are not case sensitive and must be unique.
Type	**Percent** of the food value, or a **fixed amount**.
Value	The percentage or the amount.
Minimum order	The basket must reach this subtotal.
Maximum uses	0 means unlimited. The code stops working at the limit.
Expires	Optional last day.
Active	Switch a code off without deleting it.

How customers use it

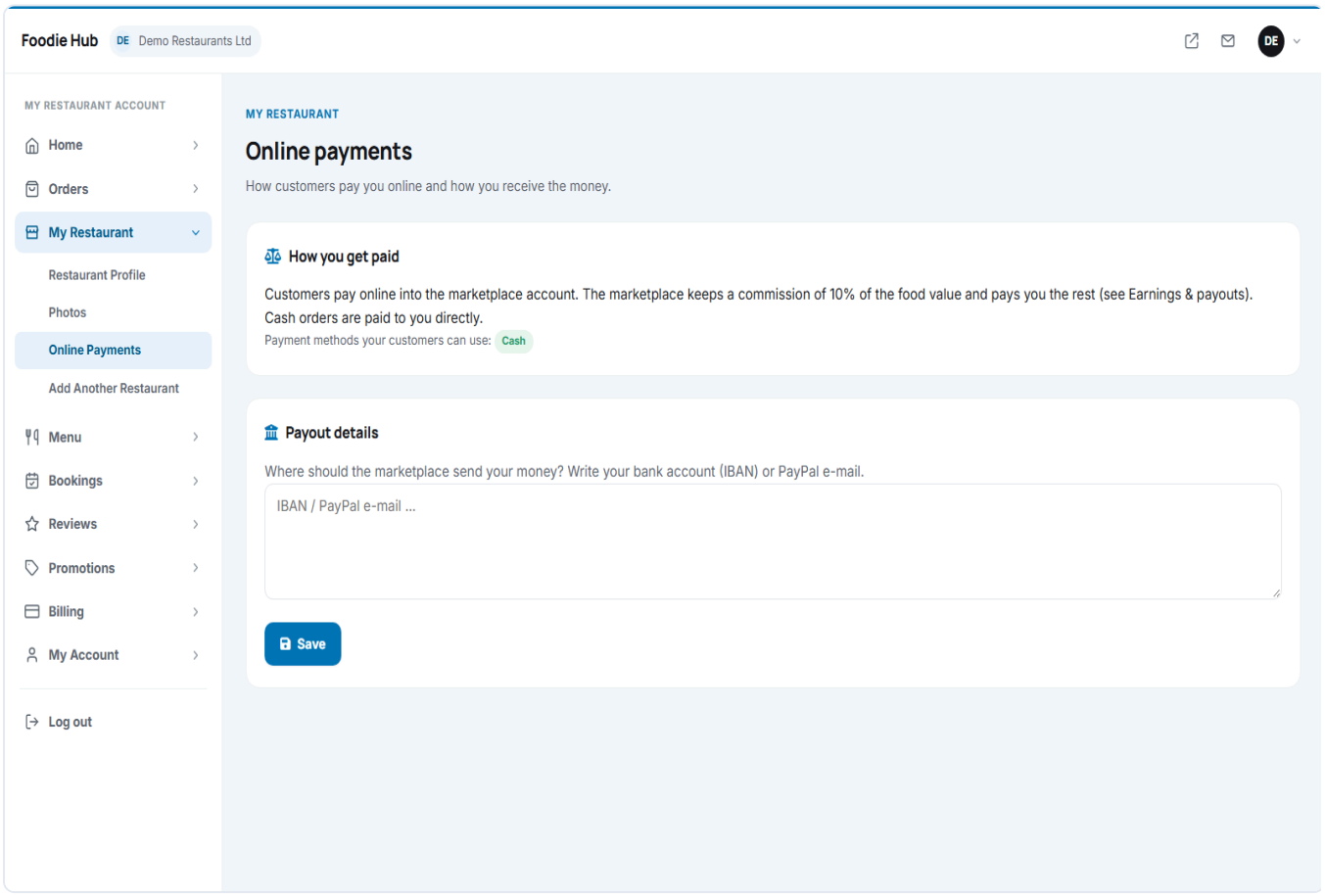
In the basket or checkout they type the code and press **Apply**. The discount is shown in the order summary. An invalid, expired or too-small order gets the message "This promo code is not valid for your order."

The discount reduces the food value, so the marketplace commission is calculated on the discounted amount.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

Online payments: how the restaurant gets paid

Open **My restaurant → Online payments**. The page adapts to the charging mode that the marketplace uses and explains it in plain words.



The online payments page explains how the restaurant gets paid

What the owner sees in each charging mode

Mode	What it means for the restaurant	What to set up
1 - Monthly fee	Customers pay the restaurant directly. The marketplace takes no commission.	The restaurant's own Stripe and/or PayPal API keys (optional - cash always works).
2 - Commission, paid later	Customers pay into the marketplace account. The marketplace pays the restaurant later, minus its commission.	Payout details: bank account (IBAN) or PayPal e-mail.
3 - Split payment	The payment is divided automatically at the moment of purchase.	**Connect with Stripe** (and PayPal Merchant ID) so the money reaches the restaurant directly.

Connect with Stripe (mode 3)

1. Press **Connect with Stripe**. The owner is redirected to Stripe to create or connect an account.

2. After finishing, the page shows *Stripe account connected*. If the registration was not completed, a **Continue Stripe registration** button appears.

Payment methods customers can use

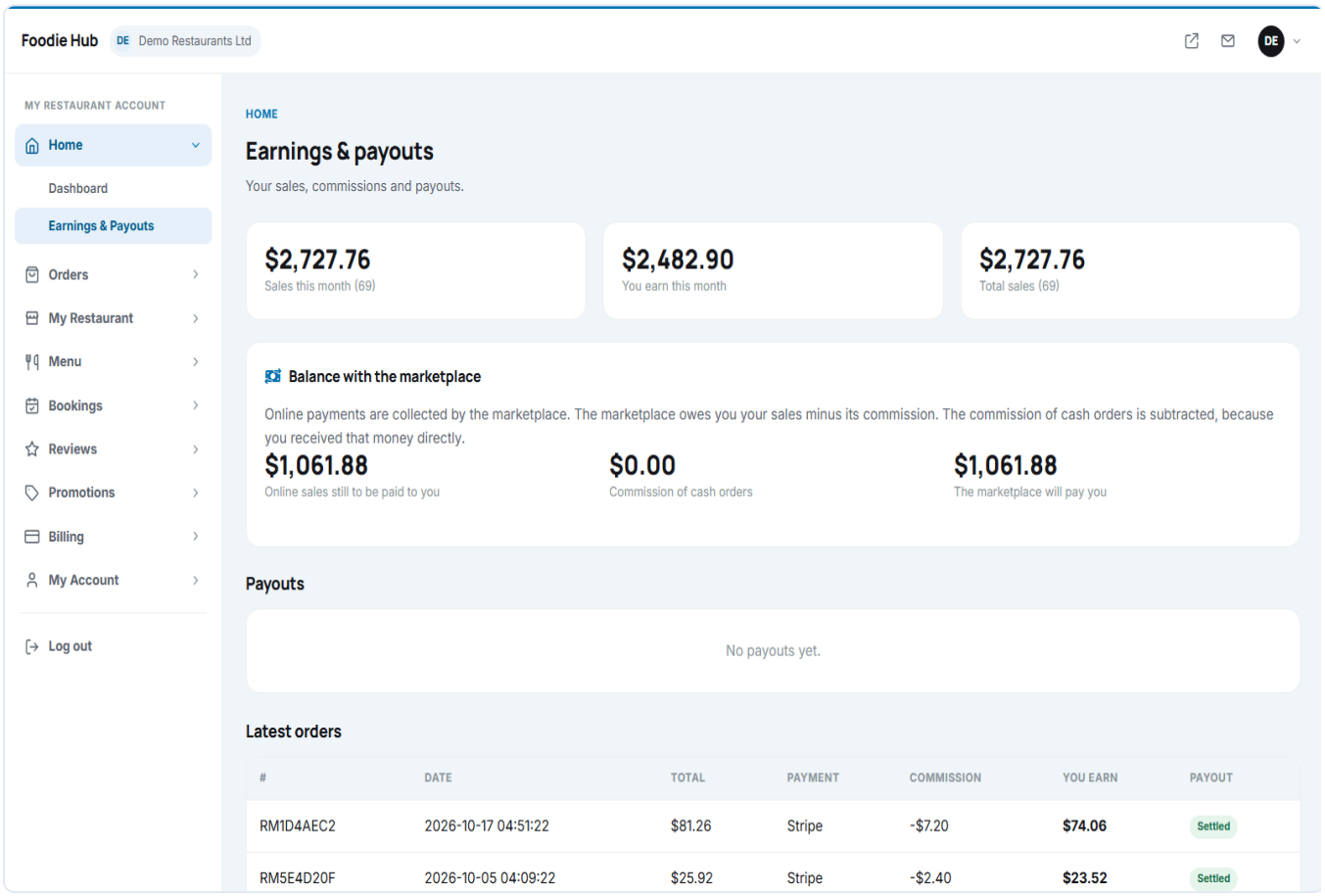
The owner chooses **Accept cash** and **Accept online payments**. If both are off the restaurant cannot take orders. A method that the marketplace did not enable shows "This payment method is not enabled by the marketplace".

The dashboard checklist item *Set up how you get paid* is complete when at least one method is working.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

Earnings, commission and payouts

Money questions are the number one reason restaurants leave a marketplace. **Home → Earnings and payouts** answers them without a single e-mail to you.



Sales, earnings, balance with the marketplace and payout history

The numbers

- **Sales this month** and **total sales**, with the number of orders.
- **You earn** - sales after the marketplace commission.
- **Balance with the marketplace** - explained for the current mode.
- **Payouts** - every settlement you made to the restaurant.
- **Latest orders** - total, payment method, commission, what the restaurant earns and the payout state (*Pending*, *Settled*).

How the balance is calculated

Mode	Balance
2 - Commission, paid later	Online sales still to be paid, minus the commission of cash orders (the restaurant already received that cash). Shown as **The marketplace will pay you**, or **You owe the marketplace** if negative.

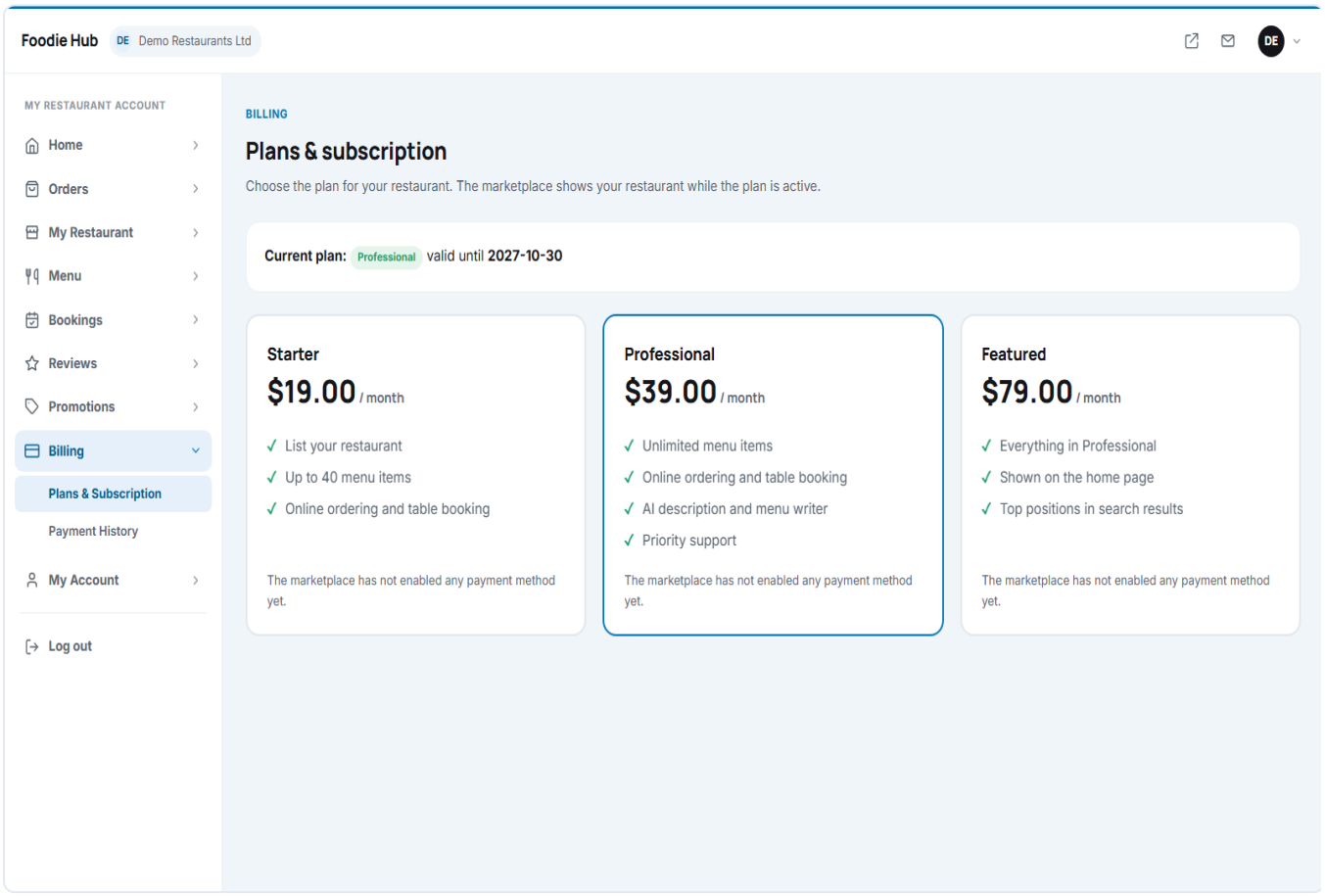
3 - Split payment	Online money is already split. The only open amount is the commission of cash orders that the restaurant owes.
1 - Monthly fee	No commission and no balance - the page only shows sales.

The marketplace administrator settles balances in Payments → Payouts; once settled, they show in the restaurant's payout history.

RESTAURANT OWNER PANEL

Plans, billing and subscription

When your marketplace charges a monthly fee, restaurants manage their subscription in **Billing → Plans and subscription**.



Available plans with prices and the current plan

Choose and pay

1. Compare the plans: price, duration, number of dishes and whether the plan is featured.
2. Press **Choose this plan** (or **Renew**).
3. Pay with **card (Stripe)**, **PayPal** or **bank transfer**, depending on what you enabled.
4. Card and PayPal payments activate the plan at once. For a bank transfer the owner sees your bank details and the message "Please make the bank transfer" - the plan starts when you approve the payment.

Free trial and expiry

New restaurants may get a free trial period. When a plan or trial ends, the restaurant disappears from the website and cannot receive orders until it renews. The dashboard shows a notice.

Payment history

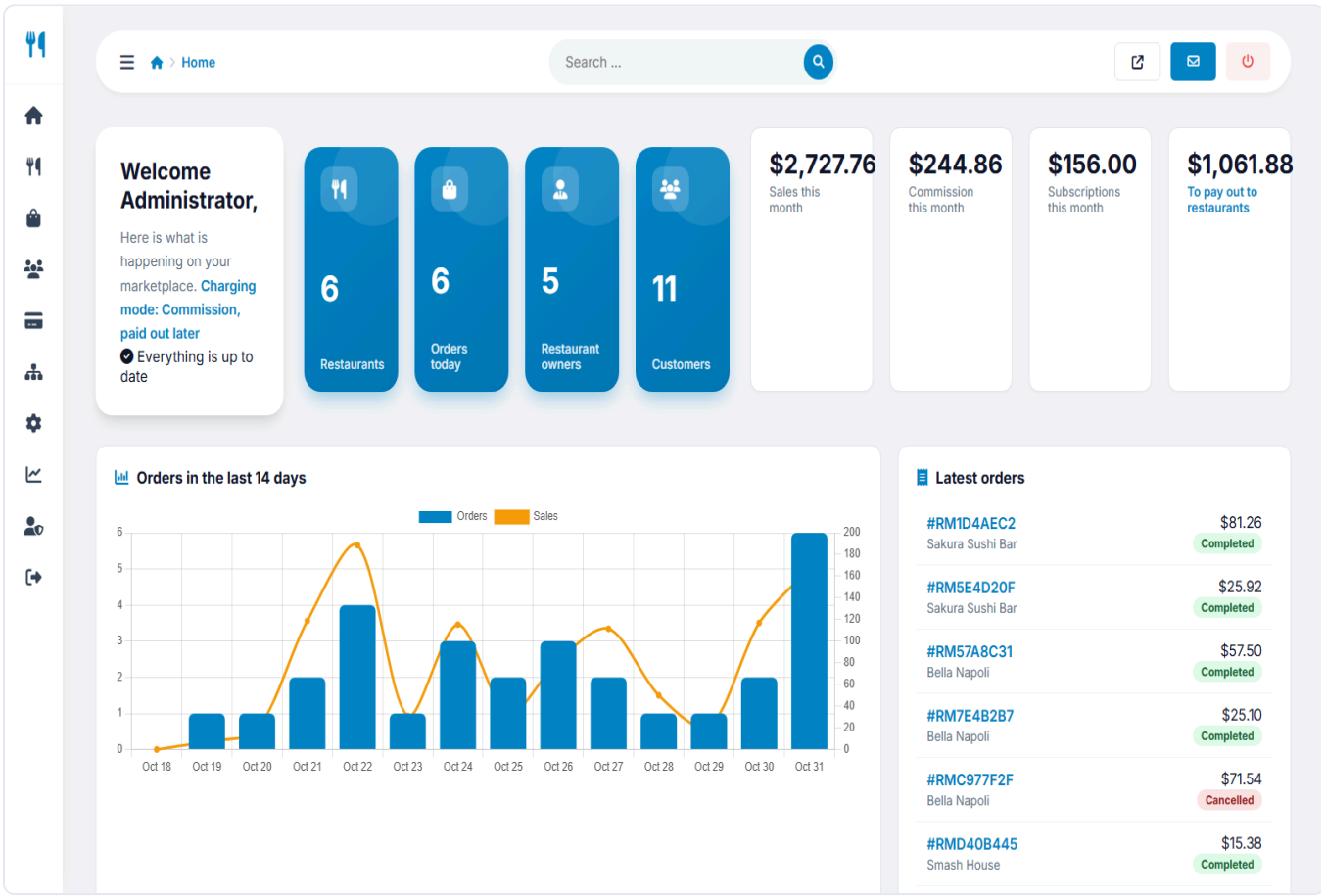
Billing → Payment history lists every subscription payment with date, amount, method and reference.

If you earn only through commission and do not require a subscription, this page is not needed - owners just keep selling. See charging modes.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

The admin dashboard

The administration panel at `/ADMIN/` is where you run the whole marketplace. After login the **Home** → **Dashboard** gives you the state of the business in one screen.



The admin dashboard with tiles, a 14-day chart and the latest orders

The dashboard

- **Welcome card** - shows the active charging mode and reminders, for example "Add your AI API key", "Configure e-mail sending" or "3 restaurants waiting for approval".
- **Blue tiles** - number of restaurants, orders today, restaurant owners and customers.
- **Money tiles** - sales this month, your commission this month, subscription income this month and **what you still have to pay out** to restaurants.
- **Orders in the last 14 days** - a chart with bars for orders and a line for sales.
- **Latest orders** with restaurant, total and status.

The menu

Menu	Contains
Home	Dashboard, messages from the contact form, login logs, change password
Restaurants	All restaurants, add restaurant, cuisines, locations, reviews, bookings

Orders	All orders
Users	Restaurant owners and customers
Payments	Payment settings, payouts, commissions, packages, subscriptions, approve payments, archive
Website	Pages, news, FAQ, logo and favicon, interface texts
Settings	Configuration, AI, SEO and tracking, social media, languages, backups
Statistics	Traffic reports, sales report
Admin users	Administrators and groups

The search box at the top finds any admin page by name. The small buttons at the top right open the website, the messages and log you out.

Messages and login logs

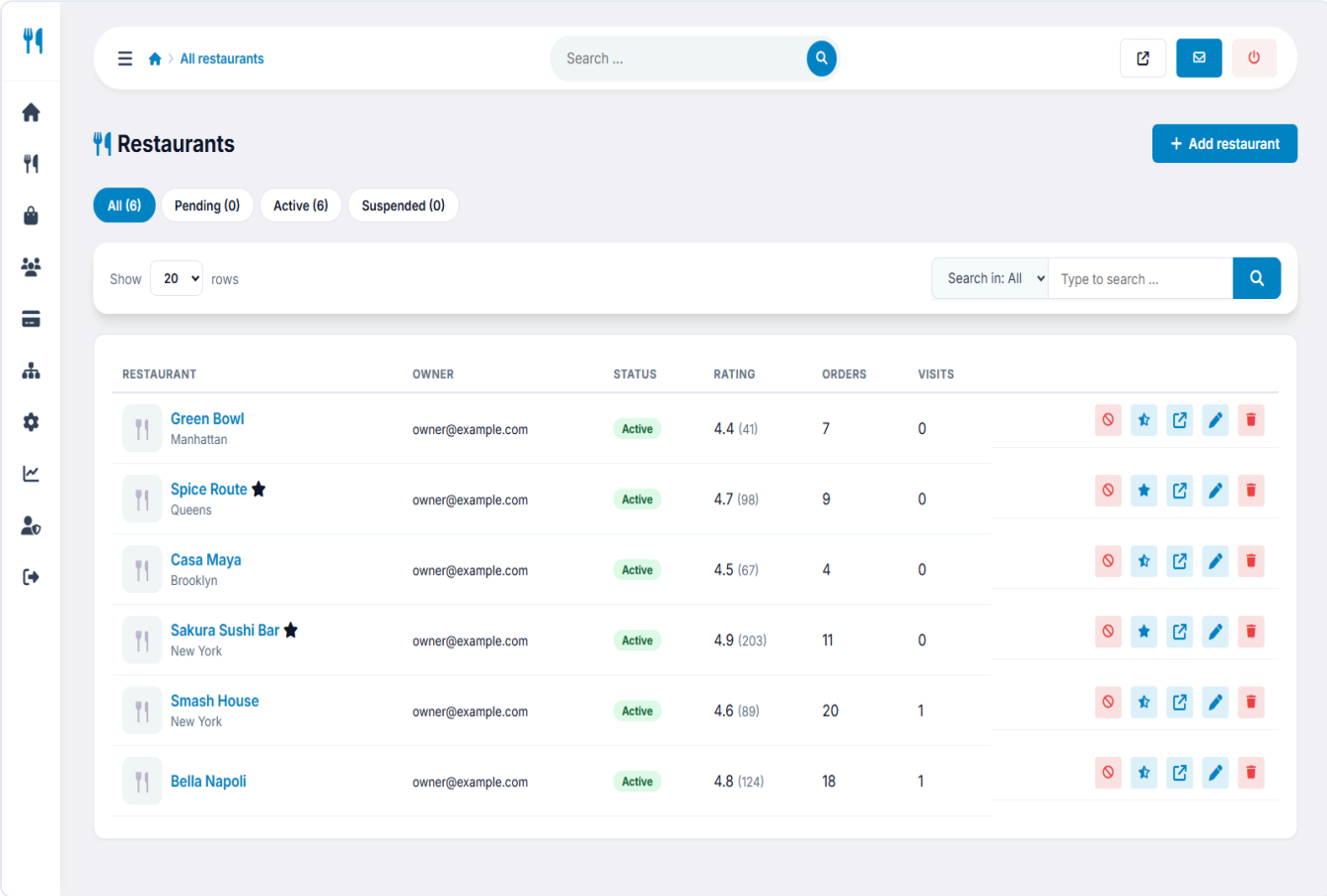
Messages lists everything sent through the website contact form; **Login logs** records every admin login attempt with the IP address and whether it succeeded - useful for security checks.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

Managing restaurants

Everything about the restaurants on your marketplace is in **Restaurants**.

All restaurants



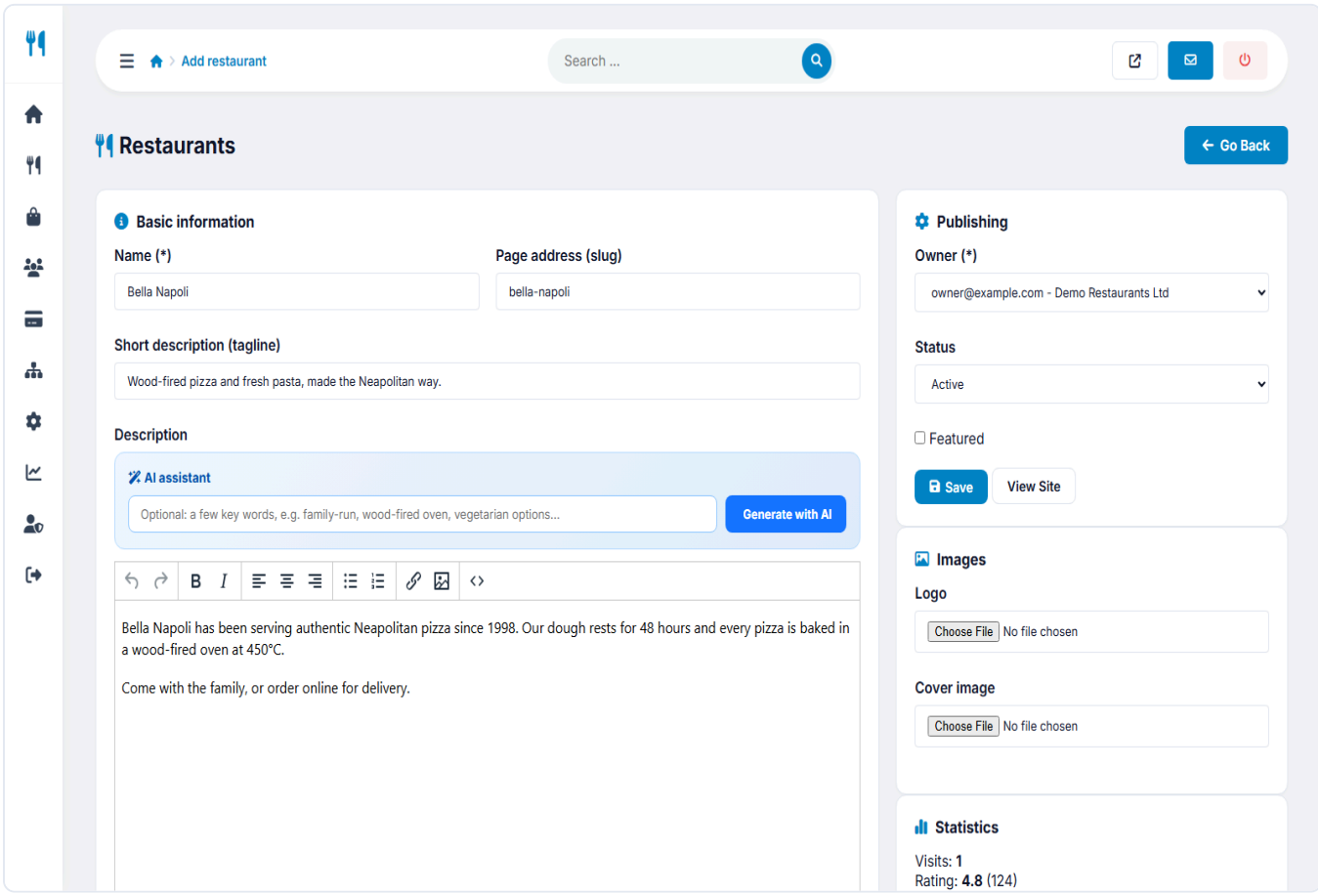
The list of restaurants with status, owner and quick actions

The list shows name, owner, status, rating and visits with buttons to edit the restaurant, open its public page and change its status (approve, suspend, feature).

Status	Meaning
Pending	Registered, waiting for your approval. Not visible.
Active	Live on the website (if the owner has a valid plan, when plans are required).
Suspended	Hidden by you. The owner sees a notice.

Approving a pending restaurant sends the owner the e-mail "Your restaurant was approved".

Add or edit a restaurant



The restaurant editor with the AI assistant, publishing box and images

The editor has the same fields as the owner profile plus a **Publishing** box: choose the **Owner**, the **Status** and tick **Featured**. The **AI assistant** writes the description for you. Opening hours, delivery rules, payment methods, logo and cover are all editable. The description is cleaned of unsafe HTML when saved.

Featured restaurants

Tick **Featured** to show a restaurant first on the home page and at the top of the search results, with a "Featured" badge. Featured listings are an easy extra income - or the benefit of a featured plan.

Reviews and bookings

- **Restaurants** → **Reviews** - approve, hide or delete customer reviews.
- **Restaurants** → **Bookings** - see all table bookings of all restaurants.

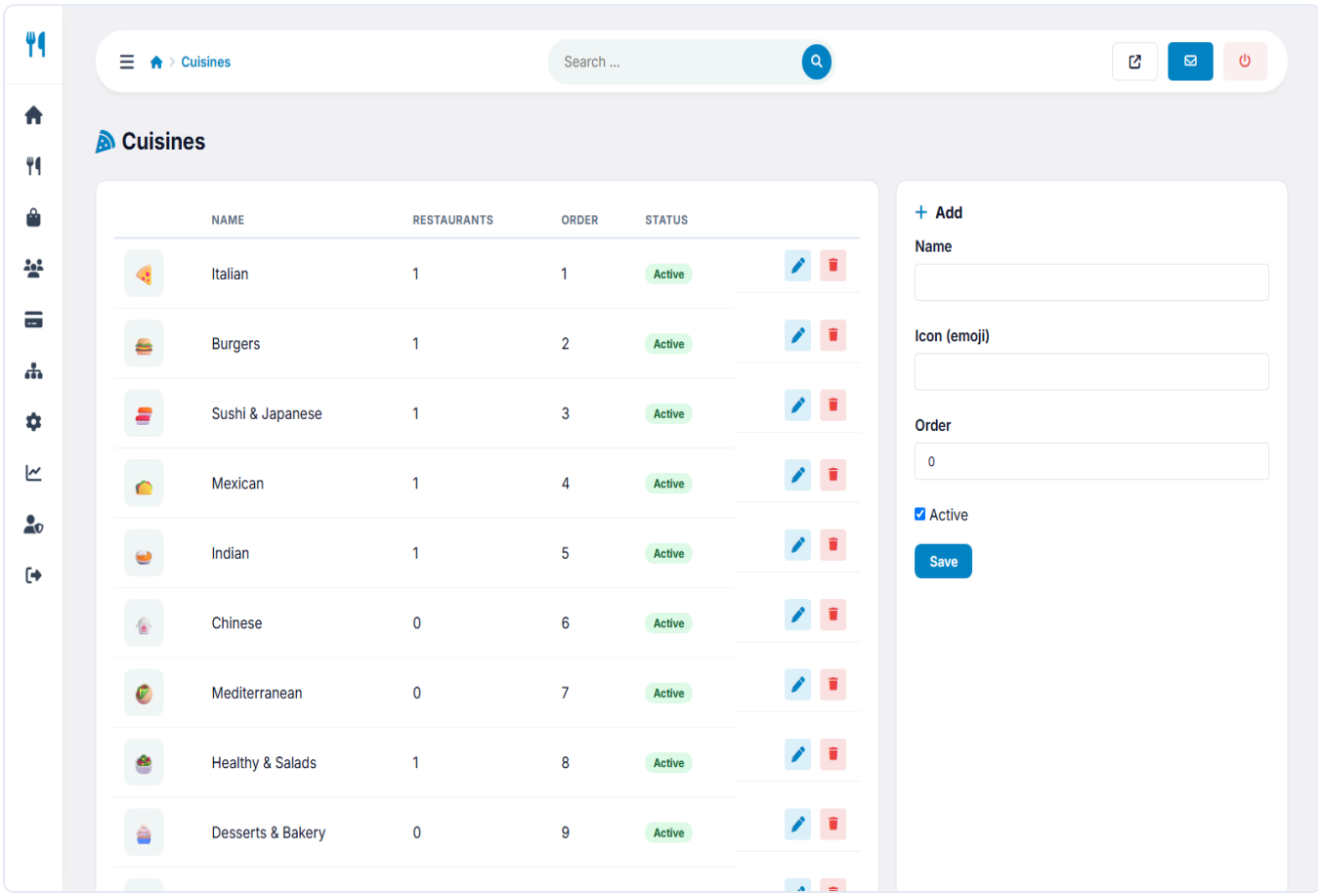
Use the *View site* button after editing to check the public page in a new tab.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

Cuisines and locations

Cuisines and locations are the two ways visitors browse your restaurants.

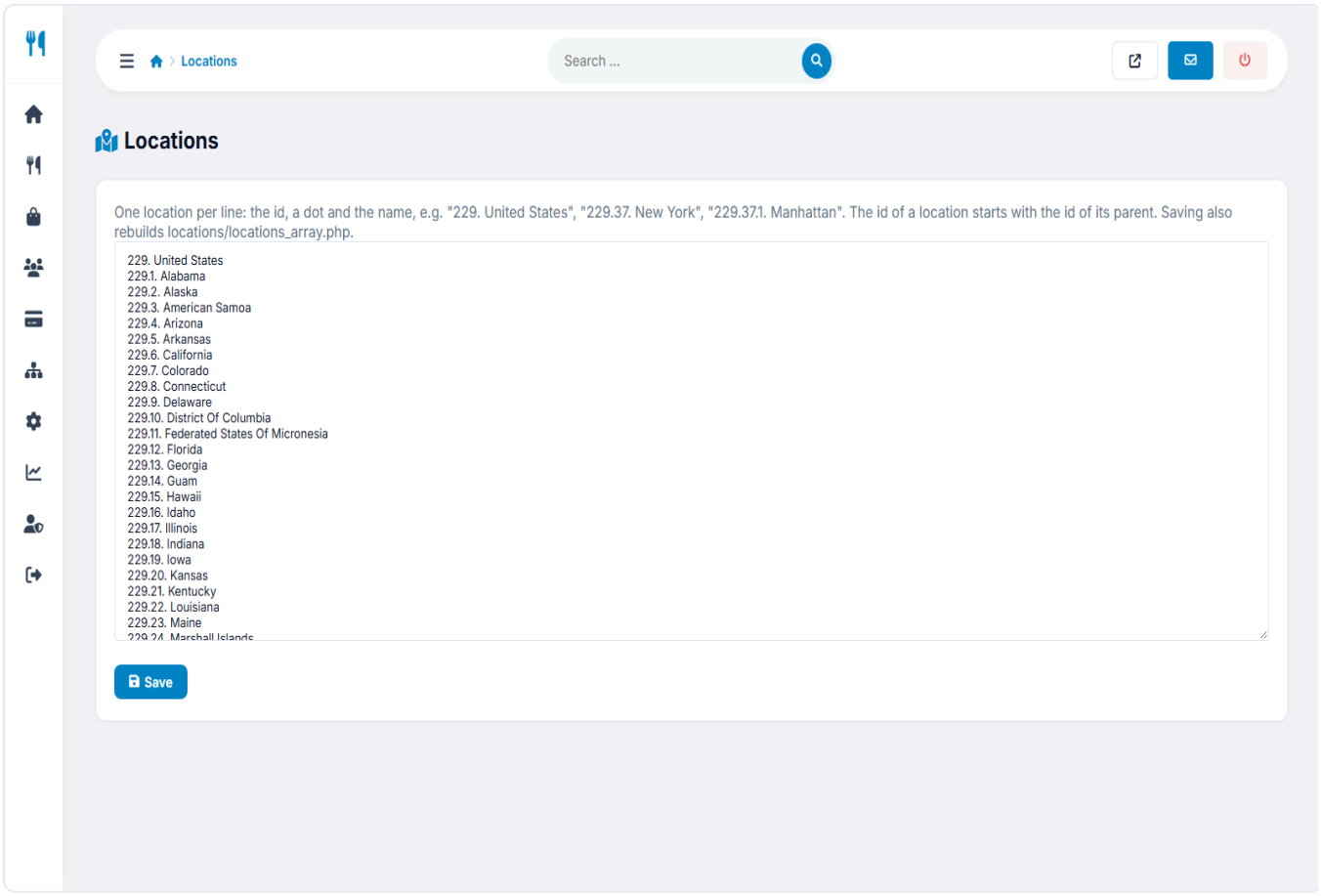
Cuisines



Cuisine list with icons and order

In **Restaurants** → **Cuisines** add a cuisine with a **name**, an **icon** (an emoji such as a pizza or sushi), a **sort order** and an **active** switch. Active cuisines appear as tiles on the home page, on the Cuisines page and in the search filter. A restaurant can have several cuisines. The installer creates ten popular ones.

Locations



The locations text editor

Locations use a simple **text file** approach that is easy to edit and to share. Open **Restaurants → Locations**. Each line is one location. The number in front is its id and its dots show the level: `229.` is a country, `229.37.` a region or city inside it, `229.37.1.` a district inside that. After you save, the script regenerates the fast lookup file (`locations_array.php`) used by the website. The location select box in the restaurant forms and in the search filters shows exactly this list.

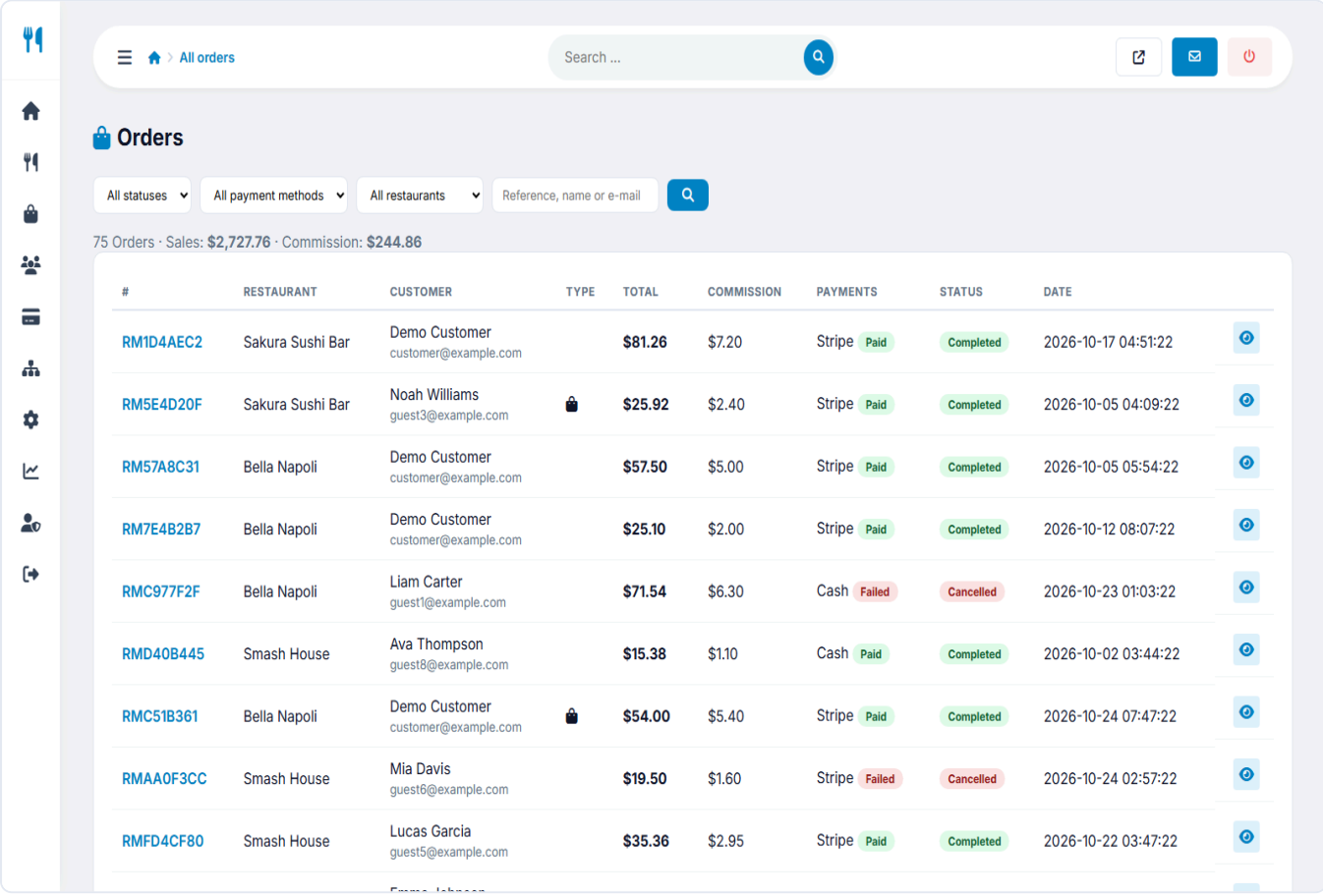
```
229. United States
229.37. New York
229.37.1. Manhattan
229.37.2. Brooklyn
229.5. California
229.5.1. Los Angeles
```

The files live in the `locations/` folder, which must be writable by PHP (see installation).

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

All orders of the marketplace

Orders → **All orders** shows every order placed on the marketplace.



The all orders list with restaurant, customer, total, payment and status

The list

Columns include reference, date, restaurant, customer, type (delivery or pickup), total, payment method and status, and the commission of the order. Filter the list by status; the totals above the list show the sales and the commission of the filtered orders.

Order details

Open an order to see all items with options, the delivery address, notes and the money split:

Line	Meaning
Subtotal, discount, delivery fee, tip, total	What the customer paid.
Charging mode	The mode that was active when the order was placed. Changing the mode later never changes old orders.
Commission	Your commission: the percentage of the food value after discounts, plus the fixed fee.

Restaurant amount	What the restaurant earns.
Payout state	None, *Pending* or *Settled* - used by payouts.

What you can do

- Change the **order status** if a restaurant forgets.
- Change the **payment status** (unpaid, paid, failed, refunded). Mark an order as *refunded* after you returned the money in Stripe or PayPal, so the commission is not counted.

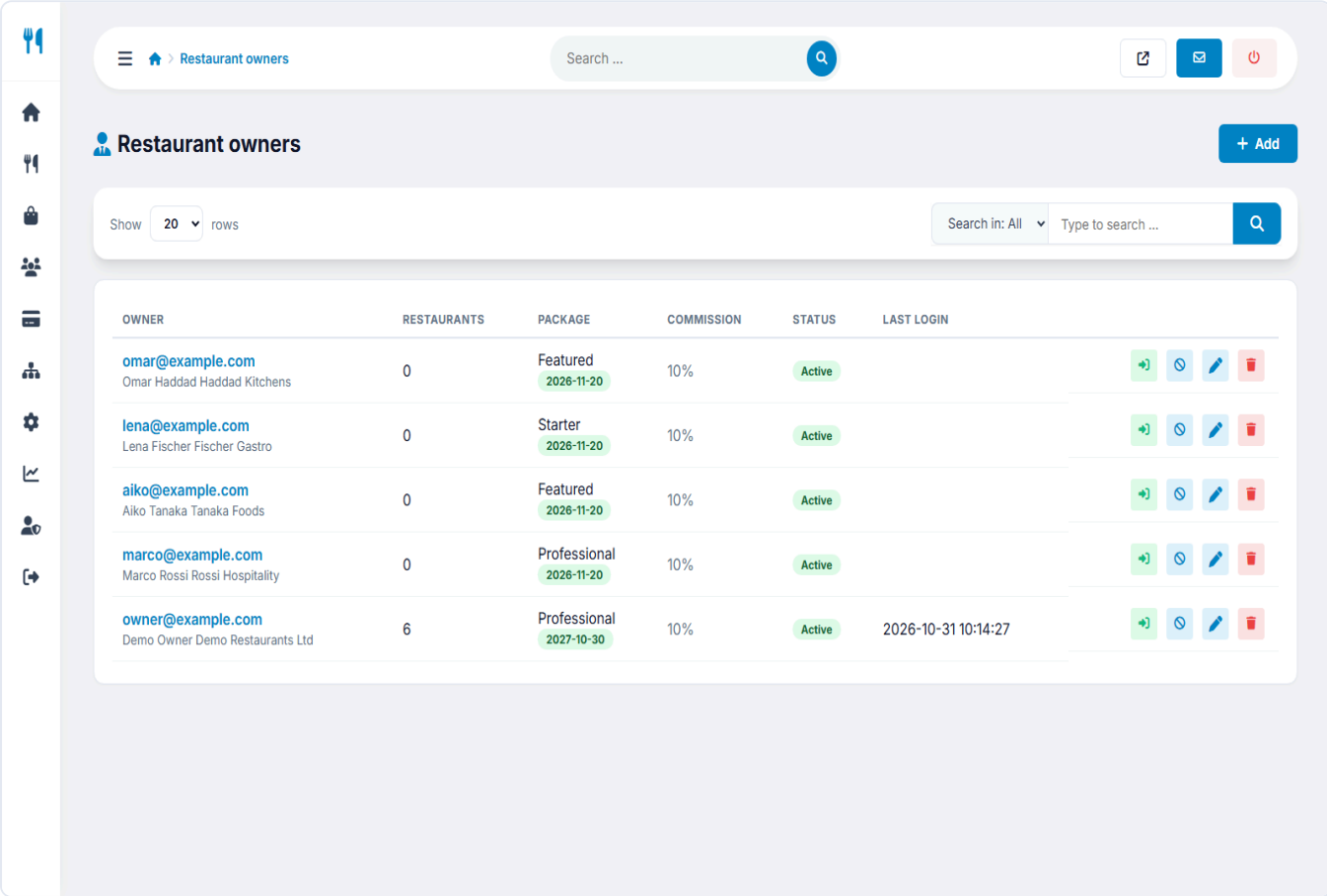
Refunds of card payments are made in your Stripe or PayPal dashboard, not inside the script. Marking the order here keeps your reports correct.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

Restaurant owners and customers

The **Users** menu has two lists: restaurant owners and customers.

Restaurant owners



The list of restaurant owners

Each owner has contact details, a company name, the number of restaurants, the current plan and its end date. You can:

- **Edit** the details, set a new password, or **activate / suspend** the account (or delete it).
- Assign a **plan** and an expiry date manually, for example as a gift or after an offline payment.
- Set an **individual commission rate** that replaces the global rate for this owner - perfect for strategic partners (see charging modes).
- Enter the **payout details** (bank account or PayPal) if the owner has not done it.
- **Log in as the owner** to see exactly what they see. Very useful for support, for example to set up a menu together.

Customers

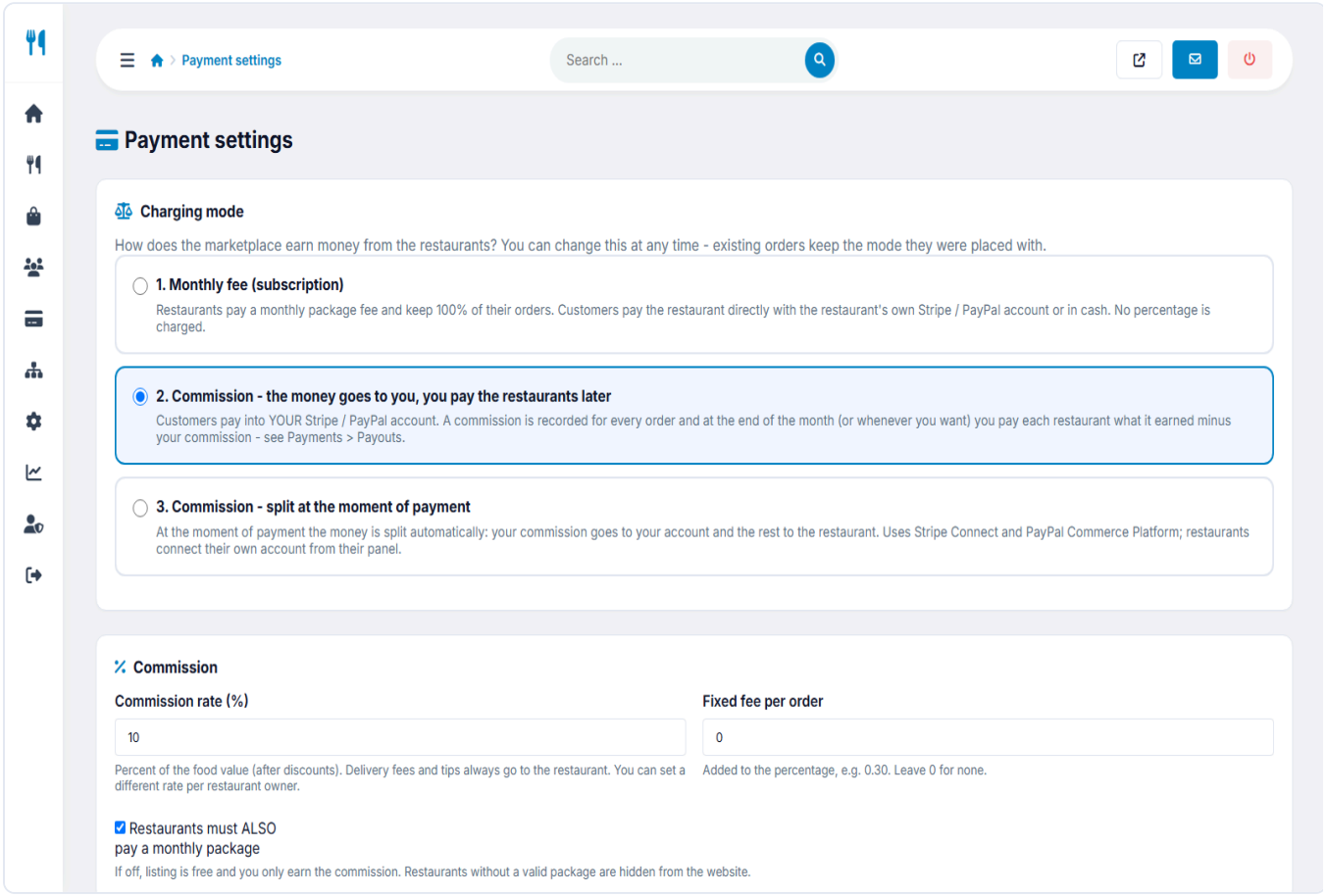
The list shows every registered customer with e-mail, name, phone and registration date. You can activate / suspend or delete accounts. Customers who order as guests do not appear here, but their orders are in All orders.

Passwords are stored as secure hashes and cannot be read by anyone, including you. If a user forgets the password, use the *Forgotten password* link or set a new one in the editor.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

Charging modes: monthly fee, commission or split payments

The way your marketplace earns money is one setting: **Payments → Payment settings → Charging mode**. You can change it whenever your business model changes.



Payment settings with the three charging modes and the commission fields

The three modes

	1 - Monthly fee	2 - Commission, paid later	3 - Split at payment
Who receives the customer's money	The restaurant, directly	You, into your Stripe / PayPal account	Split instantly: commission to you, the rest to the restaurant
What the restaurant pays	A monthly plan, no percentage	A commission on each order	A commission on each order
Payout work for you	None	You pay restaurants later (Payouts)	None - automatic
Restaurant needs	Own Stripe / PayPal keys (or cash only)	Payout details (IBAN / PayPal)	A connected Stripe account (and PayPal Merchant ID)

Best for	Predictable income, directory style sites	Delivery-app model with full control of the money	Hands-off marketplaces

Commission settings

- **Commission rate (%)** - percent of the food value *after discounts*. Delivery fees and tips always belong to the restaurant.
- **Fixed fee per order** - added to the percentage, for example 0.30.
- An **individual rate per owner** can be set in Users → Restaurant owners.

Example (mode 2): a 40.00 basket with a 10% commission and a 0.30 fixed fee gives you a commission of 4.30 and the restaurant 35.70 of the food value, plus delivery fee and tip.

Combine commission with a monthly plan

In modes 2 and 3 the option **Restaurants must ALSO pay a monthly package** keeps subscriptions. If it is off, listing is free and you earn only commission; restaurants without a valid package are hidden only when plans are required.

Cash orders

Cash is paid to the restaurant directly. In modes 2 and 3 the commission of those orders is still due to you: it is subtracted from the next payout (mode 2) or shown as a balance the restaurant owes (mode 3).

Changing the mode safely

Every order stores the mode, rate and amounts it was placed with. Changing the mode affects only new orders, so reports and payouts of old orders stay correct.

Not sure which one to choose? Start with mode 1 and a free trial to attract restaurants, then move to mode 2 or 3 when you have enough order volume.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

Stripe setup: Checkout, webhook and Connect

Stripe processes card, Apple Pay and Google Pay payments. Customers pay on the secure Stripe Checkout page, so no card data ever touches your server.

1. Get the API keys

1. Create a Stripe account and open the **Developers** → **API keys** page.
2. Copy the **Publishable key** (`pk_...`) and the **Secret key** (`sk_...`). Start with the *test* keys.
3. In **Payments** → **Payment settings** tick **Enable Stripe** and paste both keys.

2. Add the webhook

The webhook confirms payments even when the customer closes the browser before returning to your site.

1. In Stripe open **Developers** → **Webhooks** → **Add endpoint**.
2. Endpoint URL: `https://www.yourdomain.com/webhook_stripe.php`
3. Select the event `checkout.session.completed`.
4. Copy the **Signing secret** (`whsec_...`) into the *Webhook secret* field of the payment settings.

The script verifies the signature of every webhook, so fake requests are rejected.

3. Go live

Replace the test keys with the live keys and the webhook with a live one. Make a small real payment to check the full flow.

Stripe Connect (charging mode 3)

For split payments enable **Connect** in your Stripe account. Each restaurant presses **Connect with Stripe** in Online payments and completes a short Express onboarding. From then on every payment is created as a *destination charge*: the restaurant receives the money, and your commission is sent to you as the **application fee** in the same moment.

Which keys are used when

Mode	Order payments	Plan payments
1	The restaurant's own keys	Your keys
2	Your keys	Your keys
3	Your keys + restaurant's connected account	Your keys

Always test with Stripe's test cards (for example 4242 4242 4242 4242) before you accept real money.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

PayPal setup

PayPal is a great second payment option: many customers prefer it, and it needs no card entry. The script uses the modern PayPal **Orders v2** API, and every payment is captured and verified on the server.

Set up your PayPal app

1. Open **developer.paypal.com** → **Apps & Credentials** and press *Create App*.
2. Copy the **Client ID** and the **Secret**.
3. In **Payments** → **Payment settings** tick **Enable PayPal**, paste both values and choose **Mode**: *Sandbox* for tests or *Live* for real money.
4. Save. PayPal now appears at the checkout of restaurants that accept online payments.

Test first with a PayPal *sandbox* buyer account, then switch Mode to Live and use the live credentials.

How a payment works

The customer is sent to PayPal, approves the payment and returns to your site. The script then captures the payment **through the PayPal API** and only then marks the order as paid - a forged return link cannot create a paid order.

Split payments (charging mode 3)

Split payments with PayPal need a PayPal **partner account** (PayPal Commerce Platform). Restaurants enter their **PayPal Merchant ID** in Online payments, after they granted your platform permission. The script then sends your commission as `platform_fees` with every payment. In modes 1 and 2 no partner account is needed.

Refunds

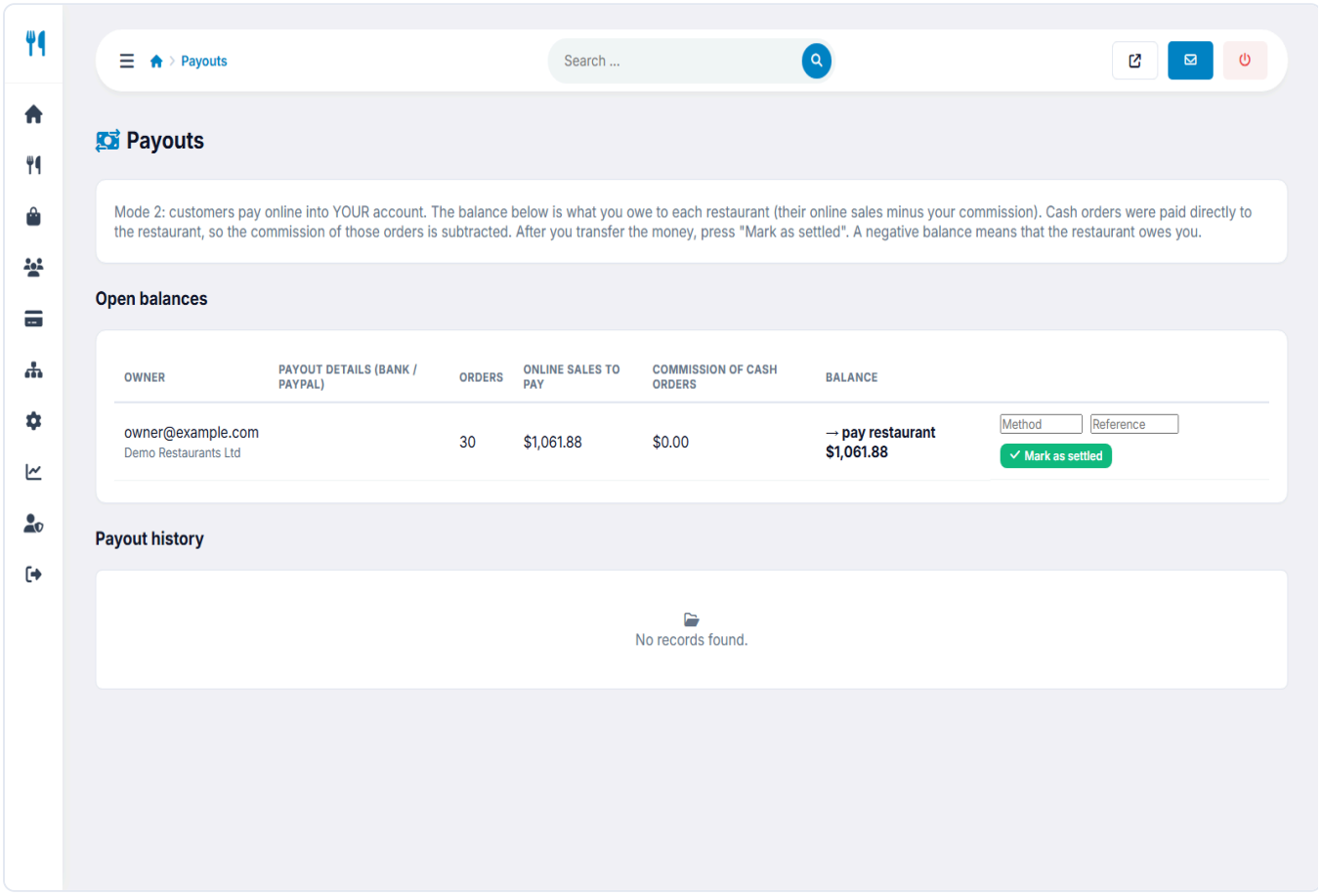
Refund in your PayPal dashboard and mark the order as *refunded* in All orders.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

Payouts and commissions

When you collect the customers' money (charging mode 2) you owe each restaurant its share. The script keeps that ledger for you.

Payouts



Open balances per restaurant owner with the Mark as settled button

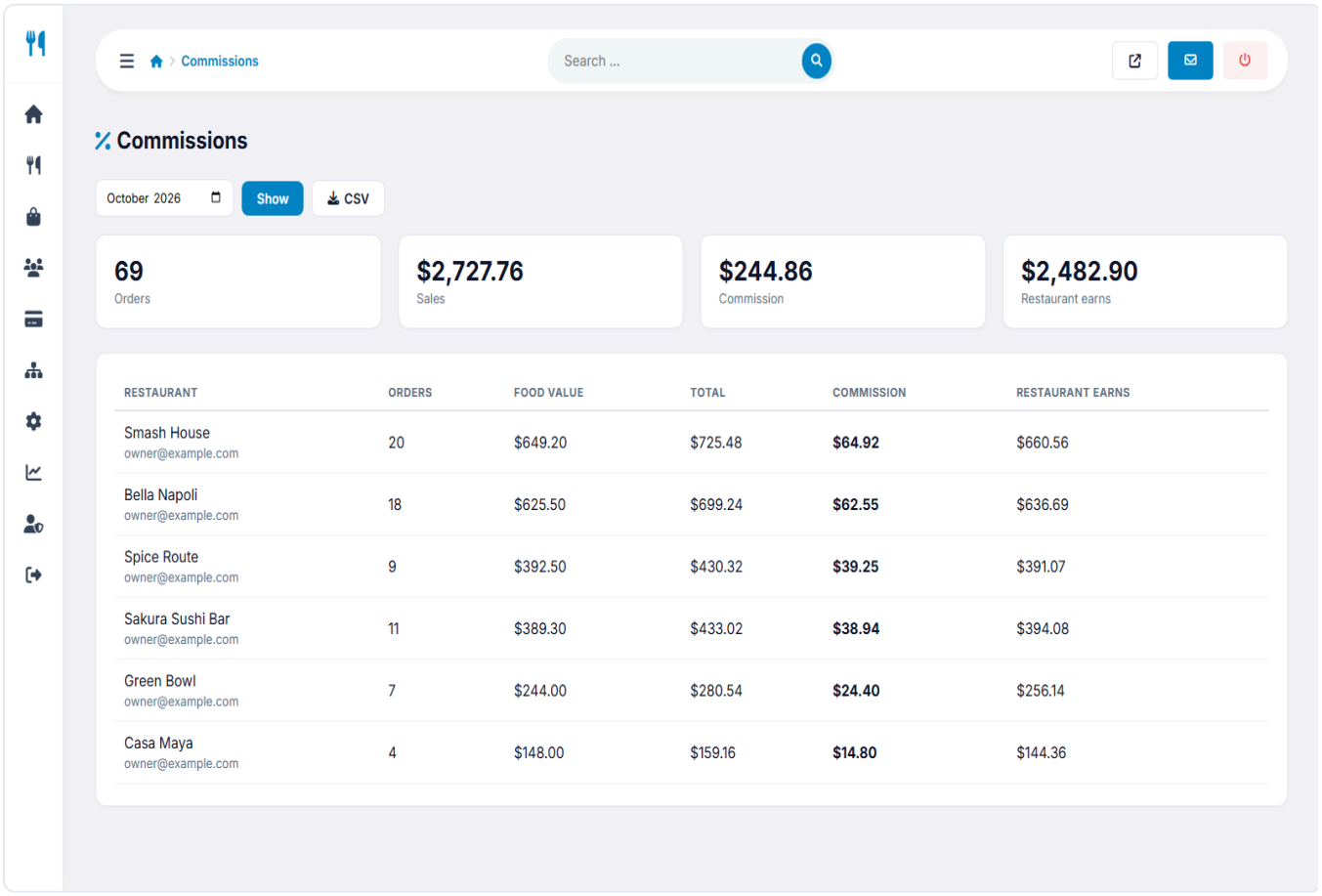
Payments → Payouts lists every owner with a balance. For each one you see the number of orders, the **online sales to pay**, the **commission of cash orders** and the resulting **balance**:

- **Pay restaurant** - the amount you must transfer.
- **Restaurant owes you** - a negative balance, when cash commissions are larger than the online sales.

1. Transfer the amount by bank or PayPal, using the payout details shown in the list.
2. Enter the **method** and a **reference** (optional) and press **Mark as settled**.
3. The orders become *Settled*, a line is added to the **payout history**, and the owner sees it in the earnings page.

The same ledger works in mode 3. There, online money is already split, so only the commission of cash orders can remain open.

Commissions



The commission report per restaurant

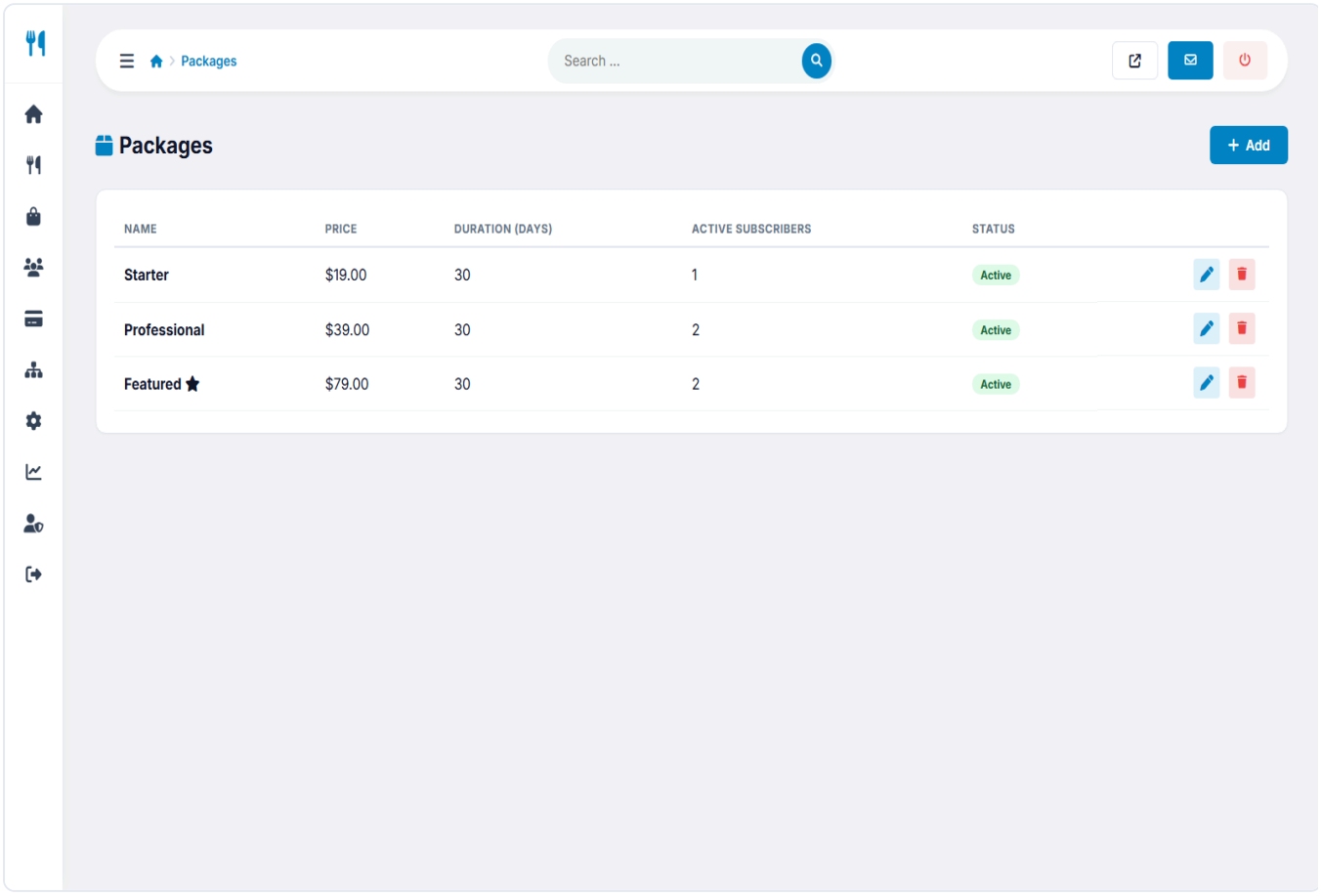
Payments → Commissions shows the commission your marketplace earned per restaurant: number of orders, sales and commission for the chosen period. Use it for your own accounting and to see which restaurants bring the most income.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

Listing plans, subscriptions and bank transfers

Plans are the monthly (or any period) products you sell to restaurants. They are used in charging mode 1, and optionally in modes 2 and 3.

Create plans



The list of plans and the form to add one

Payments → Packages lists your plans. Each plan has:

Field	Meaning
Name and description	Shown to the restaurant. One feature per line in the description becomes a bullet list.
Price	In your marketplace currency.
Duration (days)	30 for monthly, 365 for yearly.
Max menu items	Limit of dishes; 0 means unlimited.
Featured	Restaurants on this plan are shown first and get a badge.
Sort order and active	Order on the price list and on/off switch.

The installer creates three examples: Starter, Professional and Featured.

Trial

In **Payment settings → Subscriptions and currency** set **Free trial (days)**. New restaurants get that many days of free listing; 0 means no trial. Make sure the currency code (USD, EUR, GBP...) is correct.

Subscriptions

Payments → Subscriptions shows every owner with the current plan and the end date, so you see who is about to expire. You can also set a plan manually in Users → Restaurant owners.

Bank transfers

Enable **Restaurants can pay their subscription by bank transfer** in the payment settings and write your bank details. When an owner chooses a plan and "Bank transfer", the request waits in **Payments → Approve payments**. After the money arrives press approve ("Did you receive this bank transfer?") and the plan is activated.

Archive

Payments → Payments archive keeps the history of all subscription payments with method, status and reference.

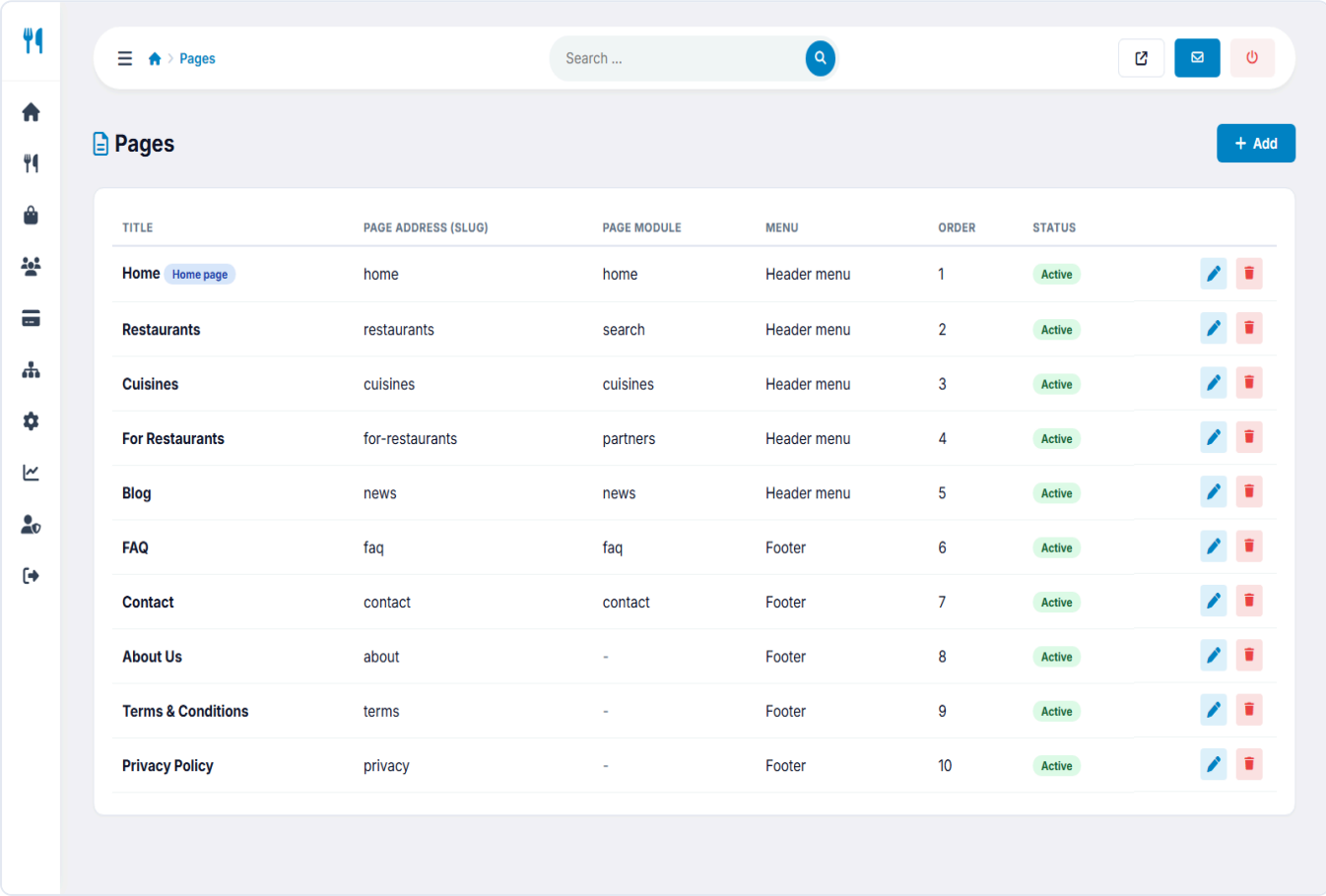
When subscriptions are required, a restaurant whose plan expired is hidden from the website and cannot receive orders.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

Pages, blog articles and FAQ

The **Website** menu controls the content of the public site.

Pages



The list of website pages

Website → **Pages** lists the pages that make up the top menu and the footer. Some pages are *system pages* connected to a script function (Home, Restaurants, Cuisines, For restaurants, Blog, FAQ, Contact); others are normal text pages (About us, Terms, Privacy). For each page you can edit:

- the **title** and the **URL name** (slug),
- the **meta title** and **meta description** for search engines,
- the **content** with a visual editor (text pages),
- whether it is **active** and shown in the bottom (footer) menu.

With several languages each page has a translation per language.

Blog (News)

In **Website** → **News** add articles with a title, a short description, cover image, publish date and content. Use the AI writer for a first draft and then edit it. A blog is the best free source of search-engine traffic: write about local food, restaurant tips and your marketplace.

FAQ

Website → **FAQ** holds questions and answers in two groups, *for customers* and *for restaurants*, with a sort order. The installer adds starter questions - adapt them to your business.

Logo and favicon

Website → **Logo and favicon** lets you upload your logo image (or use the site name as a text logo), the small browser-tab icon and choose the **primary, secondary and footer colors** of the whole website.

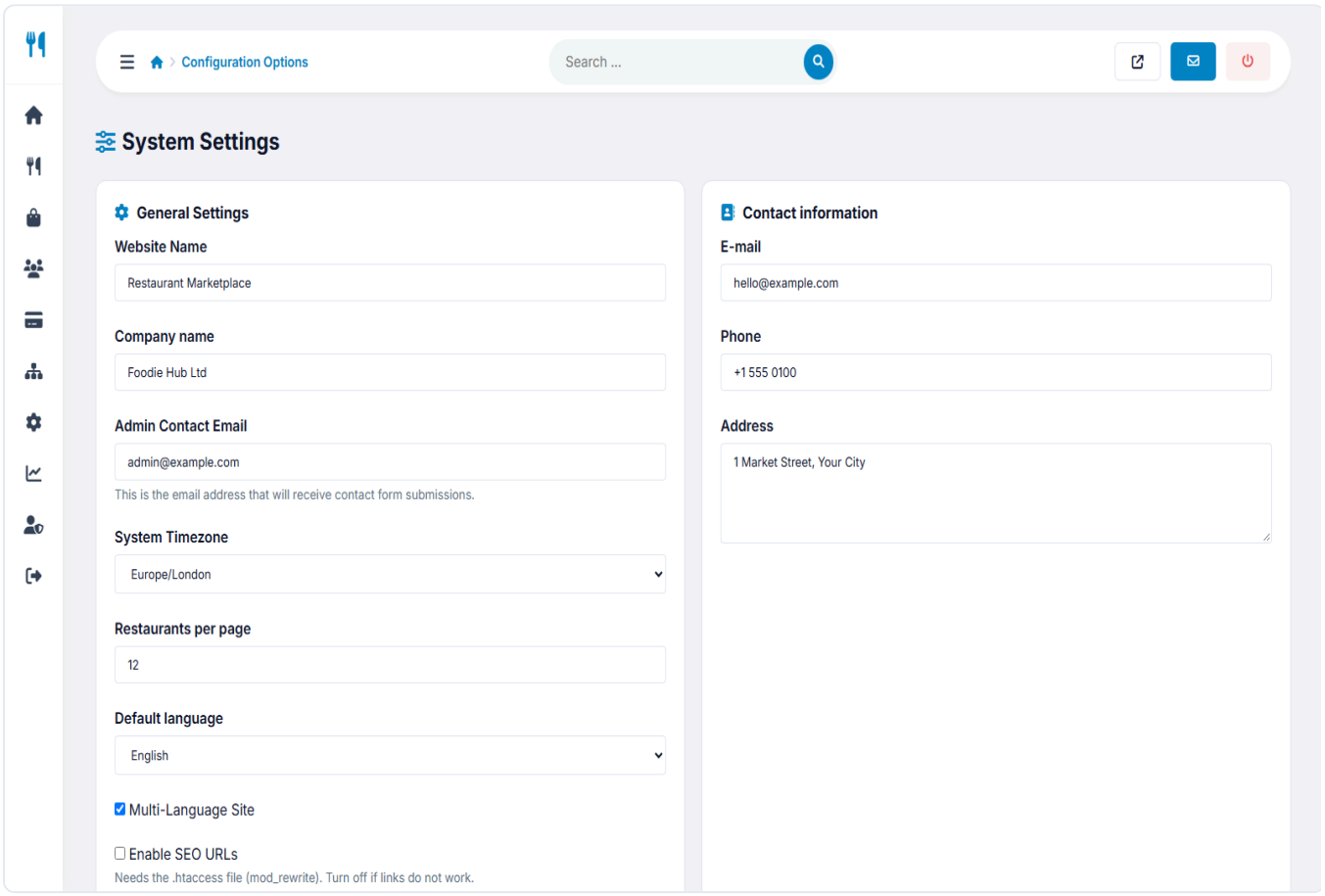
Interface texts

Website → **Interface texts** edits the button and label texts of the website in every language - see languages.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

Configuration options and e-mail (SMTP)

Settings → **Configuration options** is the main settings page. Press **Save** at the bottom after any change.



The configuration options page

General settings

Setting	What it does
Site name, Company name	Used in the logo text, e-mails and the footer.
Administrator e-mail	Receives contact messages and notifications of new restaurants.
Time zone	Used for dates, opening hours and the "open now" badge.
Items per page	Restaurants per page in the search results (6 to 60).
Default language, Multi language	Language of the site and the language switcher. See languages.
Enable SEO URLs	Clean addresses such as `/restaurant-bella-napoli`, `/cuisine-italian` and `/faq`. Needs Apache mod_rewrite and the included `.htaccess`.
Maintenance mode	Shows a "We will be back soon" page to visitors while you work on the site.

Contact information

E-mail, phone and address shown in the footer and on the contact page.

Marketplace options

Setting	What it does
Allow restaurants to register	Opens or closes the registration form.
Automatically approve restaurants	Off means every new restaurant waits for your approval.
Enable ordering / bookings / reviews	Turn a whole feature off for all restaurants.
Automatically approve reviews	Off means reviews wait for moderation.
Guest checkout	Allows ordering without an account.

E-mail settings (SMTP)

Order, booking and registration e-mails need to arrive. The most reliable way is SMTP:

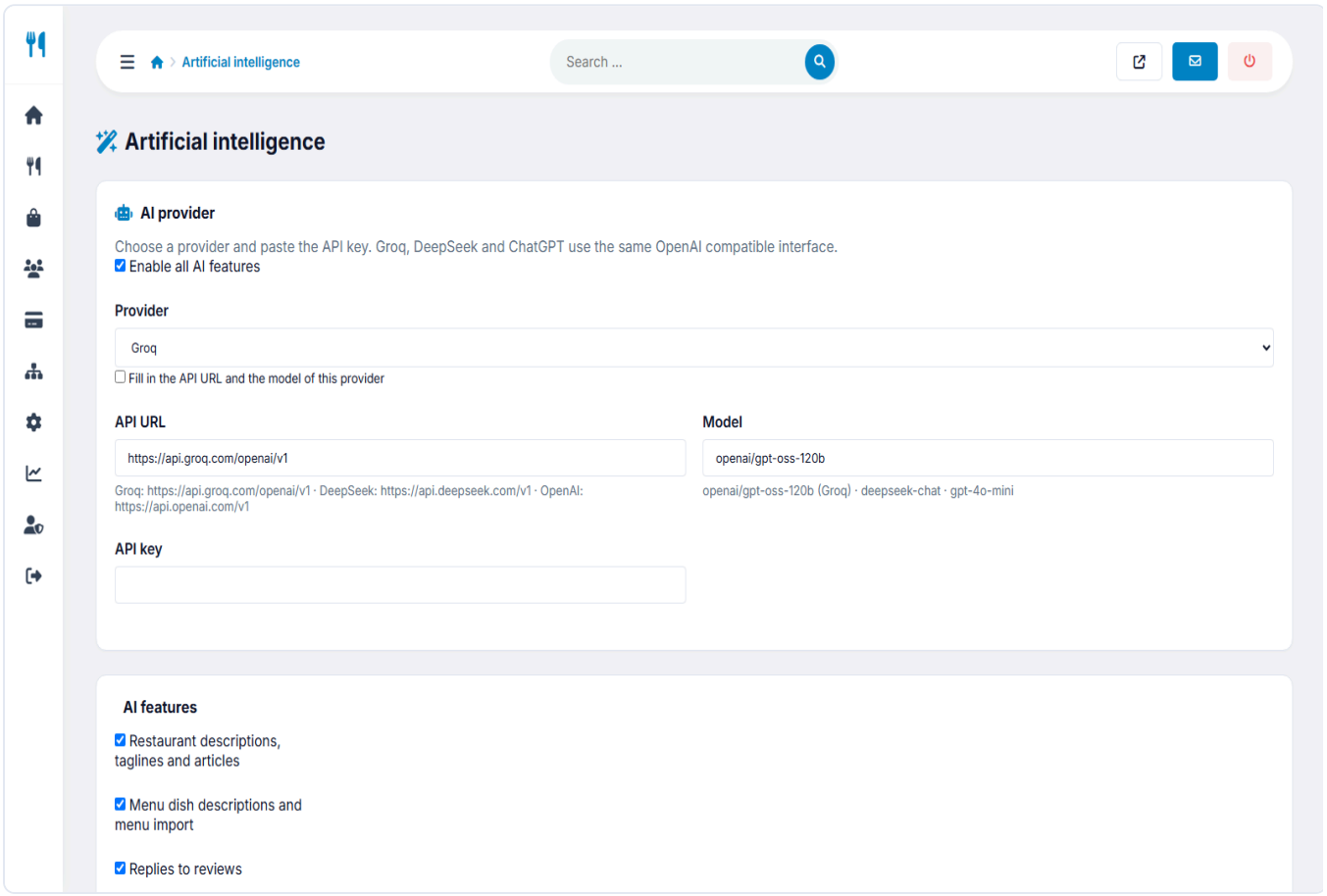
1. Enter the **From name** and **From e-mail** (use an address of your own domain).
2. Switch on **Use SMTP** and fill in server, port, encryption (TLS/SSL), user name and password from your mail provider.
3. Press **Save and send test e-mail**. A test message goes to the administrator address and the page tells you whether it worked.

If you do not use SMTP, e-mails are sent with the server's PHP mail function, and may land in spam or not be delivered at all.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

Artificial intelligence settings

One AI connection powers every smart feature of the marketplace. It works with any provider that offers an OpenAI-compatible interface - Groq, DeepSeek and OpenAI (ChatGPT) are built in as presets.



AI provider, model, API key and the list of AI features

What the AI is used for

Feature	Where
Restaurant descriptions, taglines and articles	Owner profile, admin restaurant editor, blog
Dish descriptions and menu import	Owner menu manager
Replies to reviews	Owner reviews page
AI search	Home page of the website

Set it up

1. Create an account with an AI provider and generate an **API key** (Groq and DeepSeek offer low-cost or free tiers).
2. Open **Settings** → **Artificial intelligence**.

3. Choose the **provider** and tick *Fill in the API URL and the model of this provider*. Press save; the URL and model are filled for you. Or enter your own URL (it must start with `https://`) and model name.
4. Paste the **API key**.
5. Switch on **Enable AI** and choose which of the four features to enable.
6. Press **Save and test connection**. The message "The AI connection works" confirms success.

Provider hints

Provider	API URL	Example model
Groq	`https://api.groq.com/openai/v1`	`openai/gpt-oss-120b`
DeepSeek	`https://api.deepseek.com/v1`	`deepseek-chat`
OpenAI (ChatGPT)	`https://api.openai.com/v1`	`gpt-4o-mini`

Cost, safety and limits

- Requests are **rate limited**, so a visitor or a restaurant cannot run up your bill.
- AI tools are available only to logged-in owners and admins, except AI search, which is public but limited.
- Secure connections are enforced; the API key is stored in your database and never shown to visitors.
- AI texts are suggestions: owners always review and save them.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

Languages and translations

The website and the owner panel are fully translatable. All texts live in language files, and you can edit them from the admin panel without opening a file.



The same home page in Spanish

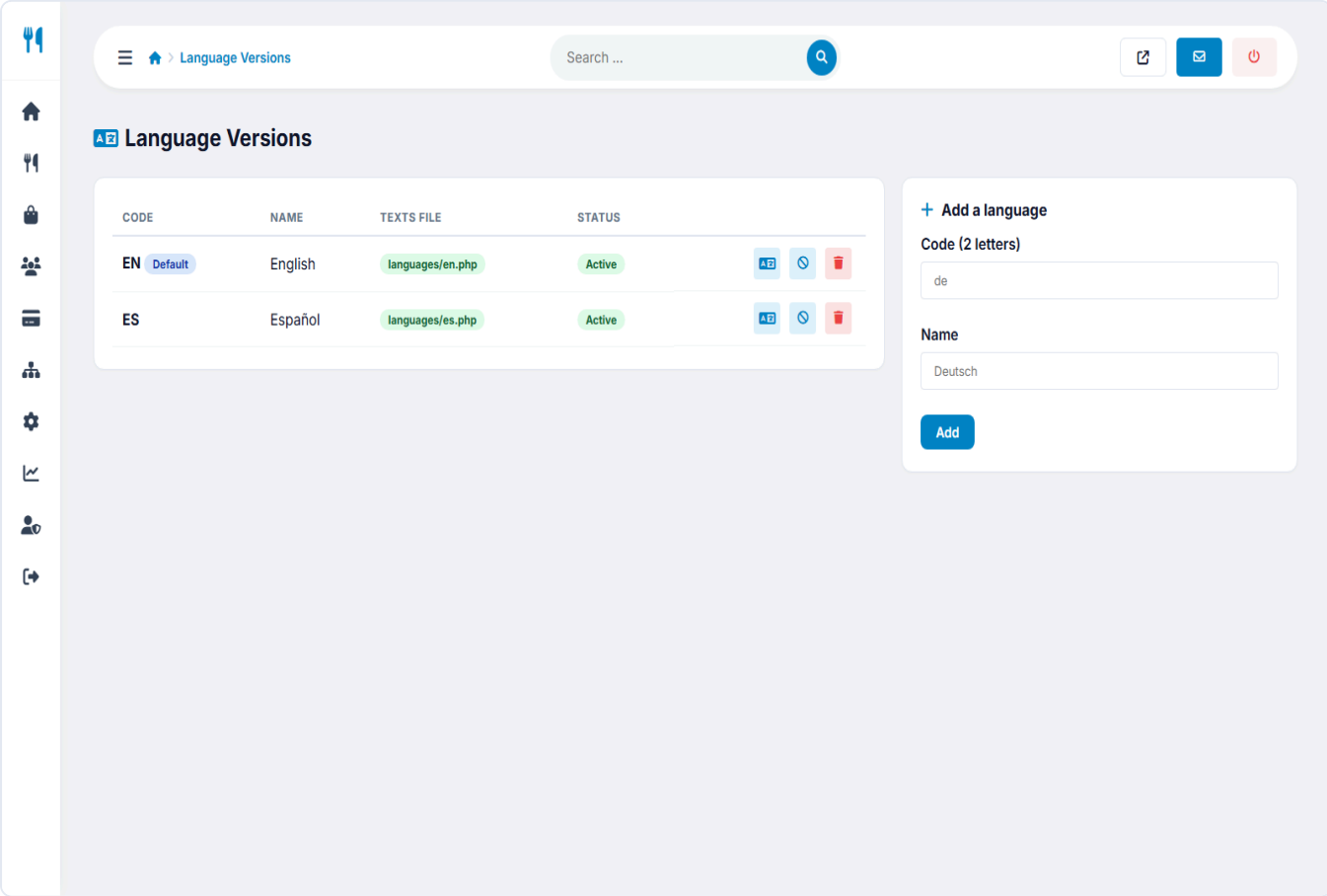
Included languages

English and Spanish are ready. The files are `languages/en.php` and `languages/es.php` (plus the owner panel texts `en_panel.php` / `es_panel.php`); the admin panel has its own English texts in `ADMIN/en.php`.

Turn on the language switcher

Tick **Multi language** in configuration options and choose the **default language**. A switcher appears in the header of the website. The choice of a visitor is remembered for the session.

Add a new language



The language list and the form to add a language

1. Open **Settings** → **Languages**.
2. Enter a **language code** (two to five letters, for example `de`) and the **name** as it should appear (for example `Deutsch`).
3. Press **Add**. The script creates `languages/de.php` as a copy of the English texts and copies the English pages and blog articles to the new language so that the site works immediately.
4. Translate the texts (next section) and the pages.

Translate the texts

Press the *Interface texts* icon next to a language, or open **Website** → **Interface texts**. Every label of the website is listed; edit the text of the chosen language and save. Texts you did not translate fall back to the English text, so the site never shows empty buttons.

Pages and blog articles are translated in **Website** → **Pages** and **News**, where each item has one tab per language.

Activate, deactivate, delete

Use the buttons in the language list to switch a language off (hidden from visitors) or delete it. The default language cannot be switched off or deleted.

Want to translate quickly? Paste the English text of a page into an AI assistant, review the result and save it.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

SEO, tracking and social media

Free traffic from Google is the cheapest way to grow a marketplace. The script is built to help with it.

SEO checklist

1. **Enable SEO URLs** in configuration options so addresses look like `/restaurant-bella-napoli` and `/cuisine-italian`.
2. Give each page a **meta title** and **meta description** in Website → Pages.
3. Write a good **description** for each restaurant - it is the main text of its page (use the AI assistant).
4. Publish **blog** articles about local food and dining.
5. Add your site to **Google Search Console** so you can follow how Google sees it.

Restaurant pages get their own title, description and the restaurant name in the address automatically.

Tracking

In **Settings → SEO and tracking** you can add:

- **Google Analytics ID** (looks like `G-XXXXXXXX`).
- **Facebook Pixel ID**.
- **Custom head scripts** and **custom body scripts** - paste any other tracking or verification code.

Social media

Settings → Social media holds the addresses of your Facebook, X / Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, TikTok and Pinterest pages. Icons appear in the footer for every address you fill in.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

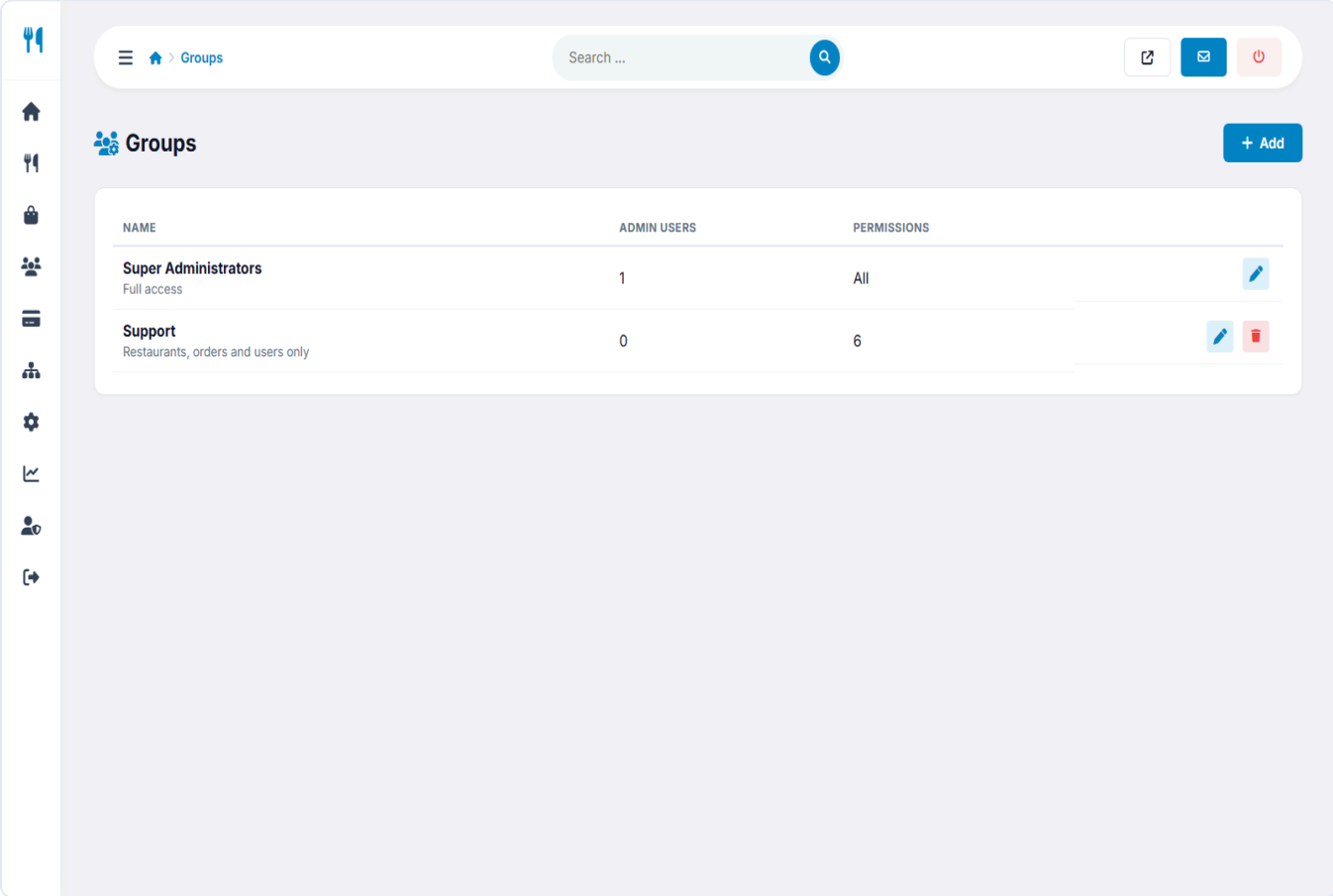
Admin users, groups and permissions

You do not have to share the main password. Create one account per team member and give each group only the permissions it needs.

Administrators

Admin users → **Admin users** lists everyone who can log in to `/ADMIN/`. Add a user with a username, e-mail, password and a **group**, and activate or deactivate accounts at any time. Every admin can change their own password in **Home** → **Change password**.

Groups and permissions



Admin groups with their permissions

Admin users → **Groups** defines roles. Each group has a set of permissions; a menu item is shown only if the group has its permission, and opening the page directly is blocked as well. Two groups are created by the installer:

Group	Access
Super Administrators	Everything.
Support	Restaurants, orders, users, messages and reviews only - no payments or settings.

Available permissions

Basic access, Settings, Restaurants, Orders, Users, Payments, Packages, Pages, News, FAQ, Logo, Interface texts, Languages, SEO and tracking, Social media, Statistics, Admin users, Groups and permissions, Messages, Login logs, Reviews, Cuisines and Locations.

Security tips

- Change the default `admin` / `admin123` password immediately after installation.
- Check **Home** → **Login logs** regularly for failed attempts.
- Serve the admin panel over HTTPS; rename `ADMIN/_.htaccess` to `.htaccess` to force it.

MAIN ADMIN PANEL

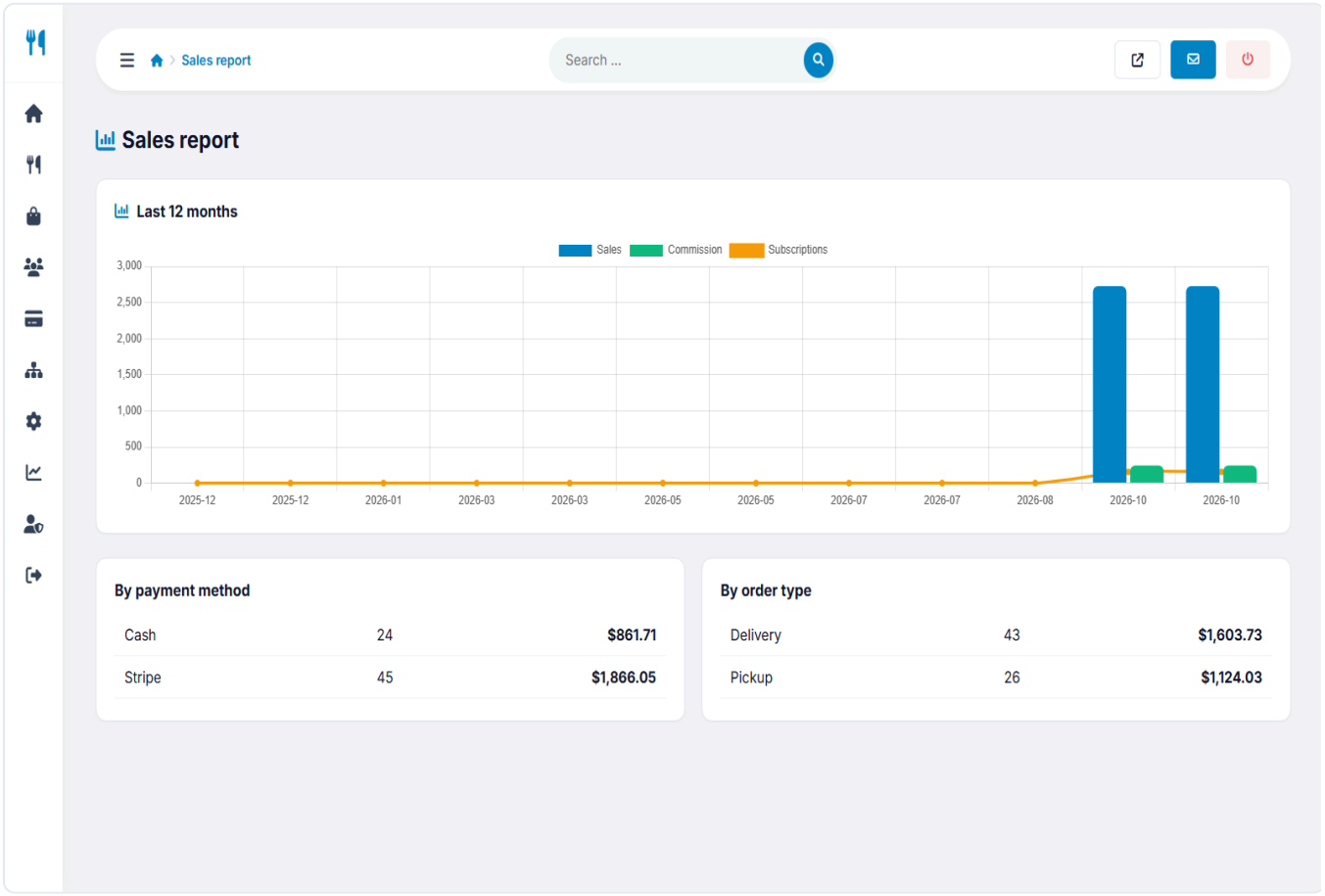
Statistics and backups

Numbers tell you where to put your effort. The **Statistics** menu has two reports.

Traffic reports

Statistics → **Traffic reports** shows visits and unique visitors per day. Choose the last 7, 30 or 90 days. Use it to see the effect of your blog posts and advertising.

Sales report



The sales report

Statistics → **Sales report** summarises orders, sales and your commission month by month, together with subscription income, the split between payment methods (cash, card, PayPal) and between delivery and pickup.

Backups

Open **Settings** → **Backups** and press **Download backup**. You receive one SQL file with all tables of the marketplace (restaurants, menus, orders, users, settings). Restore it with phpMyAdmin or the `mysql` command.

Download a backup before every update and regularly in production. Also keep a copy of the `uploaded_images` folder, because photos are not part of the SQL file.

REFERENCE

Customization and folder structure

The script is written in plain PHP without a framework, so a developer - or an advanced site owner - can change almost anything in a few minutes.

Folder structure

Folder / file	What it is
`index.php`	Front controller of the website. It loads the page controller, the page model and the template engine.
`config.php`	Domain and database access.
`include/`	Shared classes (database, page controller, template engine), the restaurant, basket and payment classes, helper functions, AI and AJAX endpoints.
`extensions/`	The pages of the website. `?mod=search` loads `extensions/search.php`. Files ending in `_tag.php` are the tags used by the template.
`templates/modern/`	The theme: `template.html`, `assets/css/style.css` and `assets/js/app.js`.
`languages/`	Text files, one per language.
`locations/`	Countries, regions and cities as a text file.
`ADMIN/`	Main admin panel. The menu is `pages_structure.php`; each page is `ADMIN/category/page.php`.
`user_admin/`	Restaurant owner panel with the same page-per-file structure.
`uploaded_images/`, `thumbnails/`	Photos uploaded by restaurants (must be writable).
`webhook_stripe.php`	Receives Stripe payment confirmations.

Change the look

- **Logo and colors** - *Website → Logo and favicon*, no code needed.
- **Layout and design** - edit `templates/modern/template.html`. The page content is inserted where `<site content/>` is; other tags such as `<site menu/>`, `<site logo/>` and `<site languages_menu/>` output the menu, logo and language switcher.
- **Styling** - all CSS is in `assets/css/style.css` with CSS variables at the top; the code uses classes instead of inline styles, so changes are easy.

Change a text

Use **Website → Interface texts**, or edit `languages/en.php`. In templates a text is written as `{{ key }}` and in PHP as `__('key')`.

Add a page that runs your own PHP

1. Create `extensions/mypage.php` with your code (look at `extensions/contact.php` for a small example).
2. In **Website** → **Pages** add a page and enter `mypage` as its extension file.

Combine with another script

The core classes, the `ADMIN` panel and the owner panel follow the same conventions as other scripts of the same family, so you can run several products on one site and copy menu entries and module files between them.

Make a backup (Settings → Backups and a copy of the files) before you change code.

REFERENCE

Security best practices

A marketplace handles customers' data and money, so security is part of the design.

Built into the script

- **Prepared statements** for all database queries - protection against SQL injection.
- **Hashed passwords** (`password_hash`) for administrators, owners and customers.
- **CSRF tokens** on forms of the website and the owner panel, and secure session cookies (HttpOnly, SameSite).
- **Login throttling** - repeated failed logins lock the session for 10 minutes.
- **Uploads** are accepted only as images, resized and re-encoded with GD, and the upload folders do not execute scripts.
- **Sanitised HTML** in descriptions and articles that restaurants write.
- **Verified payments** - the script asks Stripe or PayPal whether a payment succeeded and never trusts the return address; Stripe webhooks are checked with the signing secret.
- **Private order links** with a long secret token.
- **Permissions** for administrators by group.
- Card details are entered on the payment provider's pages and never reach your server.

Your checklist

1. Use **HTTPS** on the whole site (free certificates are available from most hosts). Rename `ADMIN/_.htaccess` to force HTTPS in the admin panel.
2. Delete `install.php`.
3. Change the default administrator password and the demo logins.
4. Remove the demo restaurants and demo users before going live.
5. Set `$DEBUG_MODE=false` in `config.php` in production so errors are not shown to visitors.
6. Keep PHP updated and back up the database regularly.
7. Use the live Stripe and PayPal keys only on HTTPS and keep test and live keys apart.

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Troubleshooting and frequently asked questions

Most problems have a simple cause. Find your symptom below.

A restaurant is not visible on the website

- Its status must be **Active** (not Pending or Suspended) - Restaurants.
- If plans are required, the owner needs a valid plan or trial - plans.
- Check that at least one cuisine and a location are selected, and that the restaurant opens the page with the *View site* button.

Customers cannot order

- *Enable ordering* must be on in configuration options, and *Accept online orders* on in the restaurant profile.
- The restaurant needs at least one dish, and at least one payment method (cash or online).
- The basket total must reach the restaurant's **minimum order**.

E-mails are not arriving

Enable SMTP and press *Save and send test e-mail* in configuration options. Use a From address of your own domain, and check the spam folder.

Photos cannot be uploaded

The folders `uploaded_images/` and `thumbnails/` must be writable and the **GD** PHP extension must be installed. Very large pictures may exceed the `upload_max_filesize` limit of your hosting.

SEO URLs give "404 Not Found"

Apache `mod_rewrite` must be enabled and `.htaccess` files allowed (`AllowOverride All`). If the script is in a sub-folder, adjust `RewriteBase` in `.htaccess`. You can switch SEO URLs off in the settings at any time.

An online payment was made but the order is unpaid

- Check that the Stripe webhook exists, points to `webhook_stripe.php` and that its signing secret is saved.
- Do not mix test and live keys.
- Open the order page again: the script verifies the payment with the provider when the customer returns, and the webhook confirms it automatically.

AI does not respond

Open AI settings and press *Save and test connection*. Check the API key, the model name and that the API URL starts with `https://`. The AI search falls back to keyword search if the provider is not reachable.

I forgot the admin password

Another administrator can set a new one in Admin users. If you are the only admin, set a new hash in the database table `restaurants_admin_users` using `password_hash`.

Frequently asked questions

Can I charge restaurants a monthly fee and a commission together?

Yes. Use charging mode 2 or 3 and tick *Restaurants must ALSO pay a monthly package*. See charging modes.

Can restaurants use their own Stripe account?

Yes. In mode 1 each restaurant uses its own keys; in mode 3 it connects its account with Stripe Connect.

Does it work for several countries or currencies?

The site has one currency at a time, set in the payment settings. Several languages and a hierarchy of locations are supported.

Can one owner have several restaurants?

Yes, the owner panel has a restaurant switcher and an *Add another restaurant* page.

Is a developer needed to run it?

No. Installation, configuration and daily work are done in the browser. Developers can customise the code, which is plain PHP.

PHP Restaurant Marketplace User Manual · NetArt Media
https://www.netartmedia.net/manuals/restaurant-marketplace/