



BUSINESS is BOOMING

Street Food Van Vendors

The United Kingdom has come a long way since the days of the humble white-panel, greasy-spoon, food van. Nowadays, street food vendors of all shapes and sizes are launching mobile, van-based businesses that are driving the street food revolution.

THE STREET FOOD REVOLUTION

The food van is experiencing a surge in popularity due to the rise of street food.

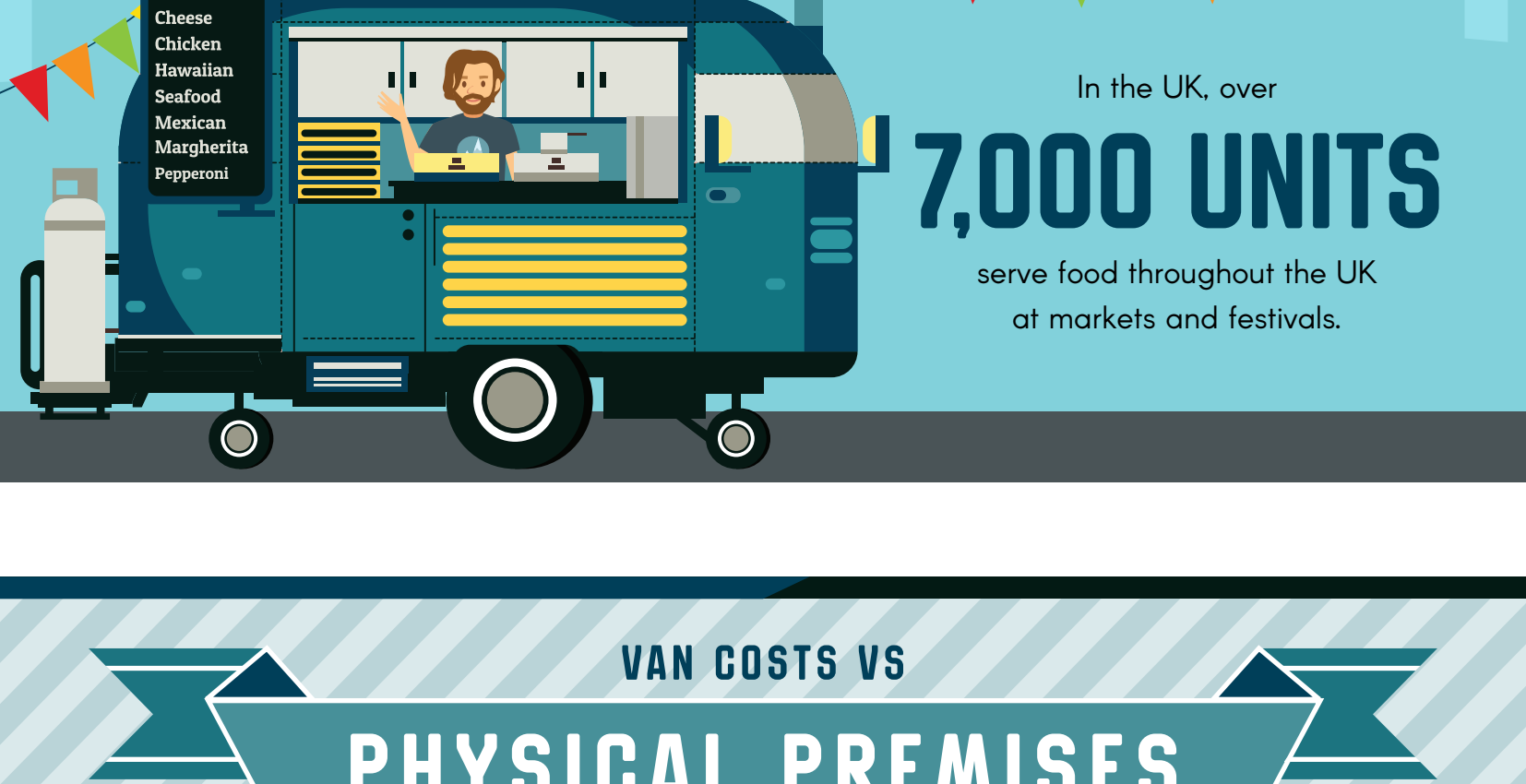


More people than ever are interested in search terms around street food and food vans.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that



Street food in countries like Thailand has long been popular – but the UK is embracing the culture with open arms.



In the UK, over

7,000 UNITS

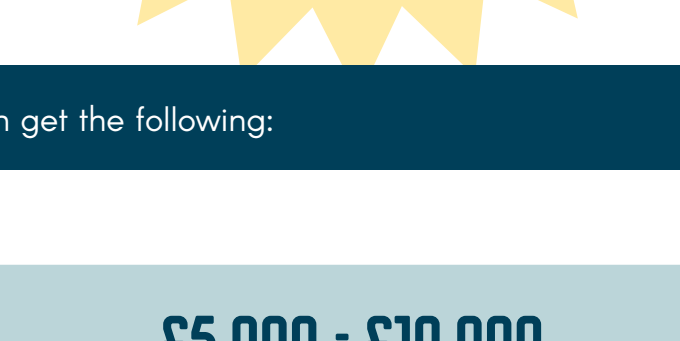
serve food throughout the UK at markets and festivals.

VAN COSTS VS PHYSICAL PREMISES

In a document by The Nationwide Caterers Association, the benefits of establishing a business in the street food sector are illustrated.

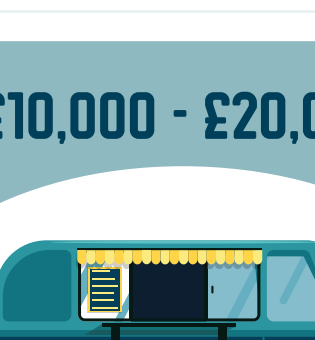
The costs of setting up a restaurant can be well over

£50,000



For this price, you can get the following:

UNDER £5,000



Small used catering trailer or market stall.

£5,000 - £10,000



Trailer, second hand van or refrigerated vehicle.

£10,000 - £20,000



New van or larger trailer.

£20,000 - £50,000



New vehicle that's converted for your needs.

HOW TO SET UP A FOOD VAN

If you'd like to cash in on this growing trend, you'll need to decide on a budget and then go about setting up your business. Streetfood.org.uk has guidance for prospective owners with the pros and cons of running street food businesses.

PROS



Relatively low start-up costs.



Chance to cook and enjoy your work.



Say goodbye to office hours.

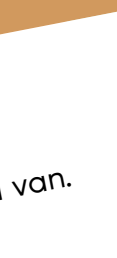


Rents can be as low as £30-100 per day.

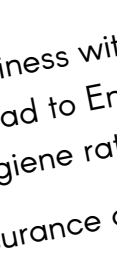
CONS



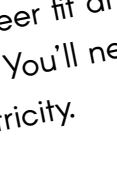
Laws against where you can and can't trade – you can't just turn up and trade.



No guaranteed work.



Early, unstable hours.



Initial profits can be low.

HERE'S THE CHECKLIST OF WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO GET STARTED...

- ☒ Purchase and kit out your food van.
- ☒ Register as a business with HMRC.
- ☒ Then register as a food business with your local authority, which will lead to Environmental Health offering a Food Hygiene rating.
- ☒ Get employers liability insurance and public liability insurance.
- ☒ Have a Gas Safe engineer fit and certify any of your gas equipment. You'll need a PAT test certificate for any electricity.
- ☒ Get a personal food hygiene certificate.
- ☒ Set up and market your website and social media.
- ☒ Buy stock, contact events/festivals/locations and get cookin'.

DIY- CONVERTING YOUR OWN VAN

So, you've decided on setting up and you want to get yourself involved. We'd recommend a mobile van, as a used vehicle can be bought relatively cheaply and then converted – many vendors, such as Newcastle pizza van Scream For Pizza, have opted to convert their own vans to much success.

Beginning with an older, used model, you'll need to budget for the following must-haves:

SEPARATE HAND & DISH-WASHING SINK



EXTRACTOR FAN FOR STEAM



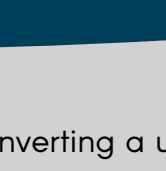
FRIDGE (& FREEZER IF NECESSARY)



FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT



GOOD LIGHTING



UTENSIL STORAGE



DON'T FORGET...

- A grill/fryer/stove or other relevant cooking equipment.
- Clean and secure waste disposal system.
- Water heaters and tanks.
- A draining board.
- A protective screen at the ordering window to protect the food from customers.
- A grease trap.
- A safe, clean food prep area.
- Electrical outlets away from water.
- Storage for food and ingredients.



Converting a used van like this can easily set you back

£15,000

so keep your budget tight and DIY anything that can be accomplished solo.

WHAT TO COOK?

According to research on the website British Street Food, the following are Britain's favourite dishes:

MEXICAN	CHINESE	THAI	INDIAN	BRITISH
Ideas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• tacos• fajitas• tortilla chips with Mexican beef chilli• burrito	Ideas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• chow mein• Sichuan-style prawns• hoisin wraps• shredded duck	Ideas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thai green chicken curry• pad thai• tom yum soup• khao phat	Ideas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• chicken balti• beef vindaloo• carrot halwa• chicken naans with Indian slaw	Ideas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• beef & gravy sandwiches• pie• full breakfast• sausages & mash

TOP TIP!

You'll need hot water to comply with health and safety regulations, so you should also pack tea bags and coffee in your van to allow you to diversify your offering and earn extra money.

INSPIRING EXAMPLES

Think setting up a van vendor business is a pipe dream? You'd be mistaken. Plenty of people have done it all for themselves.

SCREAM FOR PIZZA

Take Scream For Pizza, a Newcastle-based Pizza business run out of a converted Peugeot J7 camper van by Vicky and Alex. They gladly agreed to answer a few questions...

WHAT LED YOU TO CREATING A VAN-BASED BUSINESS?

We wanted to make a big splash in the marketplace and we knew having a fun van would put us in a great place for doing this. It's a fantastic branding and marketing tool, and we knew we wanted to go the whole hog and really throw ourselves into this business.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN PROS AND CONS OF RUNNING A VAN-BASED BUSINESS?

We do pride ourselves on having a quality product, but having a van also makes you stand out from the crowd. We believe we get more work due to both of these factors. However, people love the van and so will pick this over other options for events and private gigs. The only con is that our van was built in 1978 and it costs more to maintain and repair.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?

Our favourite part is meeting new people and going to events. There's so much happening around the North East and the UK!

ANY ADVICE TO PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT RUNNING A VAN-BASED BUSINESS?

Make your van stand out! Have a contingency budget for unexpected work and repairs too.

SOURCES

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COURTESY OF WWW.VANMONSTER.CO.UK

