Roch

# The Highest Margin Plate in the Hotel

Author: Guise Bule, CEO of Roch Dog

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The economics of the dog food menu, and how to build one safely

## Executive Summary

Somewhere between the turndown chocolate and the minibar, a new line has appeared on the luxury hotel menu. It is a bowl of grilled chicken and rice, or a filet mignon cut into cubes, and it is not for the guest. It is for the guest's dog. Four Seasons, Mandarin Oriental, Cheval Blanc Paris, Virgin Hotels and dozens of independents now print a dedicated dog menu and serve it through room service at prices that sit comfortably alongside the human food. This paper argues that the dog food menu is not a novelty. It is one of the highest margin products a hotel kitchen can sell, and its economics rest on a guest who cannot spend anywhere else.

The reason is structural. A dog dish is priced like a human main, from fourteen dollars at a resort to fifty eight dollars for the filet at Kimpton Vero Beach and about seventy five dollars for wagyu at The Peninsula Tokyo. It is built from a few ounces of ingredients the kitchen already stocks, seasoned with nothing, and plated in three minutes. Our model, built on real prices from 90 published hotel dog menus in 14 countries, the largest such collection we know of, puts the food cost margin on a hotel dog main at 84 to 94 percent. Human room service runs at 28 to 35 percent and frequently loses money once its round the clock labour is counted.

The guest who orders it is captive. A traveller with a dog cannot leave the animal to dine out, nor take it into most indoor restaurants, so they stay in and order up. The dog menu is how the hotel keeps that spend instead of handing it to the restaurant down the street. Three further routes sit beside it: brand sponsorship that can take the cost of goods to zero, retail and take home goods, and dog afternoon tea. This revised edition, October 2026, reprices the model to what the best properties actually charge, because the first edition's ceiling of thirty five dollars turned out to be well below the market.

The catch is that a dog is not a small person. Salt, garlic, butter, onions and other ordinary ingredients can injure or kill a dog, and a plate of chicken and rice, however popular, is a treat and not a balanced diet. The second half of this paper is a practical, veterinary grounded guide to building a menu that is safe: which proteins, carbohydrates, vegetables, fats and herbs belong on it, which ingredients must never touch it, and how to portion, label and prepare it so the programme protects the animal, the guest and the property at once. The opportunity is real and the barrier to entry is low. The discipline required is not culinary ambition. It is knowing exactly what to put in the bowl, and what to keep out of it.

# What This Paper Does and Does Not Do

This paper makes an economic and operational case for the hotel dog food menu, and provides a best practice guide to building one. It is written for hotel owners, food and beverage directors, executive chefs and general managers.

What it does. It models the unit economics of dog menu items using real menu prices gathered from luxury and upscale properties worldwide and transparent, stated cost assumptions. It sets out the demand and behavioural patterns that make dog dining a high capture revenue line. It documents the supply, sponsorship and retail models operators are already using. And it distils the published guidance of the leading animal health authorities into a working manual for what a hotel kitchen should and should not serve a dog.

What it does not do. The margin figures in this paper are the Roch Dog model, an informed estimate built on observed prices and typical procurement costs. They are not any single hotel's disclosed profit and loss, and no hotel dog menu margin is published anywhere in the market. Treat them as directional. The nutritional guidance is best practice drawn from veterinary sources, not veterinary advice for an individual animal. It does not replace a hotel's own counsel, a qualified veterinarian, or local food safety and animal health law, all of which take precedence. Where this paper describes a food as safe, it means safe in moderation, correctly prepared, for a healthy adult dog with no known medical condition or allergy.

SECTION 1

# The Opportunity

The dog is no longer luggage. It is a member of the party whose comfort shapes where the family stays, how long, and what they spend when they get there. Hotels that understood this early built policies and amenities around the animal. The dog food menu is the point at which that understanding reaches the kitchen.

It is worth being precise about what the menu is, because the category is young and the label covers several things. At its simplest it is a short list of freshly prepared dishes, a protein with a carbohydrate and a vegetable, cooked plain and served in the room. At the top of the market it extends to filet mignon, poached salmon, house baked biscuits, frozen dog friendly ice cream, and dog afternoon tea served in the hotel's own parlour. What unites them is that they are prepared food, priced and sold as food, and delivered through the same room service operation that serves the humans. A dog dish carries a human style price on a fraction of the cost and labour, and it is sold to a guest who cannot easily spend anywhere else. That makes it among the most profitable individual products a hotel can put on sale. Done carelessly, it is also a way to make a dog ill. The first half of that sentence is the opportunity. The second is the craft. Both are the subject of this paper.

The market underneath it is large and growing. The dog friendly hotel segment is valued at approximately 4.6 billion dollars and is growing at a compound annual rate of around 12 percent, on a path toward roughly 8 billion dollars by the end of the decade. Dogs dominate the pet travel category, accounting for well over half and in some luxury datasets the large majority of all travelling pets. The guest at the centre of it is affluent. The demographic shorthand is the DINKWAD, the dual income household with no children and a dog, a group whose annual spending power is estimated at 259 billion dollars today and projected to approach 427 billion by 2030. These are not travellers looking for a room that tolerates an animal. They are consumers who will pay a premium for a property that treats the dog as a welcome guest, and who read a thoughtful dog menu as exactly that signal.

The clearest evidence that the menu works commercially is that it has spread across every tier of the market. For this edition Roch Dog assembled the largest collection of published hotel dog menus we know of: 90 menus from 14 countries, 478 priced dishes, gathered from the hotels' own in room dining PDFs and menu pages between 2024 and October 2026. The whole dataset sits behind the figures that follow, and the pattern it shows is simple. The dog menu exists at every price point from a six dollar bowl to a seventy five dollar wagyu, and the price is set by the hotel, not by the dog.

At the top, The Peninsula Tokyo's Best Friend Menu sells a wagyu beef steak don at 11,000 yen, about 75 dollars for 150 grams, and a dog club sandwich at 5,400 yen. Bishop's Lodge, an Auberge resort in Santa Fe, charges 60 dollars for carne asada with elote. Kimpton Vero Beach, a Florida resort rather than a palace, prices an eight ounce filet of beef with gravy at 58

dollars, served on china, with salmon and ground beef at 26 and organic chicken at 28. Hilton Nagoya sells a three course dog dinner for 8,000 yen. Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston lists codfish and caviar at 50 dollars. The Chedi Andermatt charges 38 Swiss francs for chopped venison and game birds and The Dolder Grand in Zurich 35 francs for beef with rice. Hotel Cipriani in Venice serves a beef tartare at 38 euros, La Réserve Paris prices every dog dish at 36 euros, Four Seasons Philadelphia a filet mignon at 42 dollars, and in Paris Cheval Blanc's hand cut beef bowl is 32 euros and Mandarin Oriental's chopped steak 28.

Beneath those statement dishes sits the body of the market. Across the 90 menus, a main course at an ultra luxury property has a median price of about 20 dollars, at a luxury property about 16, at an upscale property about 15. Four Seasons alone spans 14 dollars in Austin to 42 in Philadelphia for the same idea; Belmond runs from 15 pounds at the Cadogan in London to 38 euros at the Cipriani. Virgin Hotels London Shoreditch launched its "Bone Appetit" room service menu in late 2025 priced, in its own words, at human prices, with a 28 pound fillet steak. At the resort and casual end, properties serve chicken, beef or salmon and rice bowls from as little as 6 dollars, and British pubs sell a supplier's standard dog bowl at five to eight pounds.

Two further things the dataset shows are worth a food and beverage director's attention. First, the American luxury hotels charge the dog's dinner exactly as they charge the guest's: a 17 to 22 percent service charge, a 5 to 9 dollar delivery fee and in some cases an administrative fee on top of the menu price, so a 42 dollar filet leaves the kitchen at nearer 55. Second, the best operators price by portion. The Peninsula Tokyo lists every dish at 65 and 150 grams at roughly double the price, Okuma in Okinawa at 80, 120 and 160 grams, and The Rubens at the Palace in London by the 200 gram portion, which lets a Chihuahua and a Labrador both order the same dish and pay for what they eat.

The price a dish will bear, in other words, is set by the hotel's own room rate and its own market, not by the category. Mount Nelson in Cape Town sells a three course dog afternoon tea at 250 rand, about 14 dollars, and fills the terrace; Great Scotland Yard in London sells its version at 35 pounds and books out weeks ahead. Both are right for where they are. The properties charging single figures for a dog's steak at a five star rate are the ones leaving money on the table, and the roughly sixty luxury hotels in our search that advertise a dog menu without publishing a price are leaving the booking on it too, because a dog owner comparing hotels cannot buy what they cannot see.

SECTION 2

# The Captive Guest

The dog menu earns its margin twice. Once directly, on the plate, which section 3 quantifies. And once indirectly, by capturing on property spend that would otherwise leave the building. The indirect effect is the larger of the two, and it rests on a simple behavioural fact.

A guest travelling with a dog is not free to move. Most hotels, sensibly, do not allow dogs to be left alone in guest rooms for long, because an anxious dog in a strange room barks and damages property. At the same time, public health rules in most jurisdictions keep dogs out of indoor restaurants, the hotel's own included. The guest is therefore boxed in. They cannot leave the dog to go out to dinner, and they cannot bring the dog into the dining room. What they can do is order room service, or sit on a dog friendly terrace where the animal is welcome beside them. The spend does not disappear. It is funnelled directly into the hotel's own outlets. This is the Stay In Effect, and the dog menu is the instrument that turns it into revenue rather than a missed opportunity.

The measured evidence that dog owning guests are worth more comes from booking data: KeyData's analysis of its managed rental portfolio found pet friendly properties running at 54 percent occupancy against 48, with a 9 percent higher daily rate and 24 percent higher revenue per available night, and AirDNA measures a rate premium of 17.41 dollars a night on pet friendly listings. The figures the industry usually quotes alongside them, that dog owners stay 2.56 nights against 2.1 and spend 30 percent more on property, are older and softer: the first traces to a 2006 trade magazine article through Buhalis and Chan (2023), and the second to travel trade press with no study behind it, so this paper treats both as indicative and rests nothing on them. What is not in doubt is the mechanism. A hotel that genuinely welcomes the dog is hard to find and, once found, not lightly abandoned, and the guest who is boxed in by the dog spends where the dog is allowed to be. Industry analysis indicates that pet related services, while a modest share of total hotel revenue, contribute a disproportionately high share of profit, precisely because the incremental cost of serving a guest who is already in the building, from a kitchen that is already running, is so low. The hotel that tracks food and beverage revenue per occupied room night for dog guests against the rest of the house will have the real number within a quarter, and nobody in the industry has published it.

Precise menu attach rates are rarely disclosed by hotels, and the figures that exist should be read as indicative. One Philadelphia property reported that at least 8 percent of its guests check in with a dog, a floor for the addressable audience rather than a ceiling. Modelling across pet friendly properties suggests that something between a quarter and a third of dog occupied room nights generate a dog menu order, producing an incremental food and beverage spend in the region of 45 to 65 dollars across a typical stay. These are estimates, not audited figures, but they are conservative against the observed behaviour,

and they can be lifted materially by offering the menu at the point of booking rather than waiting for the guest to discover it on arrival.

SECTION 3

# The Unit Economics

This is the heart of the commercial case, and it is best made with numbers. The following model is the Roch Dog estimate. The prices are real, taken from the 90 menu dataset described in section 1; the costs are typical luxury kitchen procurement, stated below. It is not any hotel's disclosed accounts, and it should be read as a transparent model rather than a measured result. Its purpose is to show the shape and scale of the margin, which is large and consistent enough that reasonable changes to the assumptions do not alter the conclusion.

Begin with portion size, because it is the fact that makes everything else work. Hotel dog dishes are small. InterContinental Khao Yai, which helpfully prints them, serves mains of 100 to 120 grams. A dog main is therefore roughly a hundred grams of protein with a spoon of rice and a little vegetable, not a full human plate. On that basis, and assuming luxury kitchen procurement, a reasonable per portion ingredient cost looks like this.

| Ingredient component | Estimated cost per portion |
|---|---|
| Chicken breast, 120g | $1.20 |
| Ground beef, 120g | $1.10 |
| Salmon, 120g | $2.40 |
| Beef tenderloin or filet, 120g | $4.80 |
| Rice or other carbohydrate portion | $0.15 |
| Vegetable portion | $0.30 |
| Preparation labour, approx. 3 minutes | $1.00 |

Set those costs against the prices hotels actually charge, and the margin becomes clear.

| Dish | Menu price | Food cost | Prime cost (with labour) | Gross margin (food only) | Net margin (after labour) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chicken and rice | $16 | $1.35 | $2.35 | 92% | 85% |
| Salmon and rice | $20 | $2.55 | $3.55 | 87% | 82% |
| Ground beef and vegetables | $18 | $1.40 | $2.40 | 92% | 87% |
| Filet mignon and rice | $30 | $4.95 | $5.95 | 84% | 80% |
| Pupcake or dessert | $9 | $0.55 | $1.30 | 94% | 86% |

Those are upscale prices, close to the dataset's upscale median of 15 dollars for a main. The luxury tier charges more for the same plate, and the margin widens with it. Priced at the Kimpton Vero Beach menu, with the portions scaled to match, the same model reads as follows.

| Dish, Kimpton Vero Beach portions and prices | Menu price | Prime cost (with labour) | Net margin (after labour) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Organic chicken breast, 6 oz, rice and vegetables | $28 | $3.30 | 88% |
| Atlantic salmon, 4 oz, rice and vegetables | $26 | $3.55 | 86% |
| Ground beef, 4 oz, rice and vegetables | $26 | $2.40 | 91% |
| Filet of beef, 8 oz, with gravy | $58 | $11.25 | 81% |

The headline is that a hotel dog main runs a food cost margin of 84 to 94 percent, and that the margin holds, or widens, at the luxury price points. To see how unusual that is, set it beside human room service, which typically runs a food cost of 28 to 35 percent, and which as a whole operation frequently loses money because the labour of keeping a kitchen and a delivery team ready around the clock for a low volume of orders swamps the margin on the food. The dog menu escapes almost all of that. It draws on ingredients already in the walk in for the human kitchen, so it adds no separate procurement. It requires no seasoning, no sauce work and no elaborate plating, so it consumes about three minutes of hands on labour. And it is delivered by the room service operation that already exists. The result is a product that is cheaper to source, faster to make, and sold at a full human style price to a guest who cannot buy the equivalent anywhere else.

It should be said plainly that these are small absolute sums. A dog main earns a hotel perhaps fifteen dollars of margin at an upscale price and close to fifty at Kimpton Vero Beach's, not fifteen hundred. The significance is not the size of the single ticket. It is the margin percentage, the negligible incremental cost, and the fact that the sale exists at all only because the property chose to offer it. Multiplied across a stay, across the higher order frequency of a captive guest, and across the longer stays that dog owners book, a high margin dog menu is a small but genuine profit centre that also does the larger strategic work of keeping the guest, and their wallet, inside the building.

SECTION 4

# The Three Supply Models

How a hotel sources the food determines who keeps the margin. There are three models, and they trade margin against labour and risk in different ways.

The in house model: most margin, most responsibility. The kitchen prepares the dog dishes itself from its existing inventory. This captures the full margin described above, because the marginal food cost is a few ounces of protein the kitchen already buys. The trade off is operational. It adds load to the kitchen and it puts canine food safety inside the human kitchen, which requires the discipline set out in section 7. For a property with the kitchen capacity and the will to run it properly, this is the model that earns the most.

The branded supplier model: less margin, less risk. The hotel buys ready made dog meals, often shelf stable or freeze dried, from a specialist pet food supplier, and serves them. The margin drops to around a third, because the hotel is now buying a finished product at wholesale rather than assembling raw ingredients. What it buys in return is simplicity and safety. The product is formulated by the supplier, needs almost no preparation, carries no cross contamination risk in the hotel kitchen, and sidesteps the health code questions around preparing animal food alongside human food. For a property without the kitchen appetite to cook for dogs, this is the safe and easy route.

The sponsorship model: the real unlock. A premium pet food brand pays to place its products in the hotel's dog programme, because access to a captive, affluent, dog owning audience is worth money to the brand. The clearest example is Centara Hotels and Resorts with Royal Canin: the brand sponsors a complimentary in room pet amenity of premium food and treats, and the hotel drives loyalty sign ups and direct bookings in return. The hotel's cost of goods is not merely low. It is zero, or better, because the brand is paying for placement. For a property with the dog friendly credentials to attract a partner, sponsorship turns the dog menu from a high margin line into a no cost one, with a marketing partner thrown in. This is the model most worth pursuing at scale.

SECTION 5

# Beyond the Plate

The room service main is the anchor, but it is not the whole revenue line. Three adjacent products extend it, and all three carry the same favourable margin profile because they trade on the same emotional willingness to spend on the animal.

Retail and the dog minibar. A curated selection of packaged treats, presented in the room the way a minibar is, turns the dog menu from a single mealtime purchase into an impulse one available all day. Wholesale natural treats support retail margins of 40 to 50 percent with no preparation labour at all. The Norfolk Arms, a country pub, reported GBP 5,885 from a countertop dog treat display in ten months, 2,753 units, outselling the human bar snacks beside it. That figure is the operator's own report rather than an audited one, but the pattern it illustrates is well established: the appetite for spending on the dog is often stronger than the appetite for spending on oneself.

Branded take home goods. A logo bandana sourced for a couple of dollars and sold at the front desk for twenty five or thirty five carries a margin north of 90 percent, and it leaves the property in the guest's bag as a piece of marketing. Branded travel bowls, take home jars of the hotel's own dog biscuits, and similar goods do the same double duty of parting revenue and brand extension into the guest's home.

Dog afternoon tea. This has become a distinct and high yield product in its own right, particularly in the United Kingdom. It is priced close to human afternoon tea, from around 7 pounds at a countryside hotel to 30 or 35 pounds at a London property, sits alongside a full price human tea on the same booking, and can be sold as a gift voucher, which turns the experience into a retail product marketable well beyond the guest's stay. Egerton House and Great Scotland Yard in London run established programmes, the latter reportedly booked out weeks in advance, which is the clearest possible signal of demand outstripping supply at the price on offer.

SECTION 6

# The Risks

The economics are compelling, but the dog menu is not a free lunch. The risks fall into three groups, and they are the bridge to the second half of this paper.

Food safety and the animal. A dog is physiologically not a small human. A number of ordinary human ingredients, onions, garlic, grapes, xylitol, chocolate, are toxic to dogs, some at small doses, and ordinary human cooking practices, salting, cooking in butter, leaving the bone in, can injure a dog badly. A dog menu prepared without this knowledge is not a hospitality feature. It is a liability that can send a guest's dog to an emergency veterinarian. This is the single most important operational fact in the paper, and section 7 addresses it in full.

Regulation and the kitchen. In most jurisdictions, health codes prohibit live animals from areas where food is prepared or served, the hotel's own restaurant included. The workable answer, which high performing properties already use, is to prepare the dog food in the closed commercial kitchen under normal sanitary rules, with no animal present, and to serve it only in guest rooms via room service or on designated outdoor terraces where dogs are permitted. The dog is never in the food environment. The food comes to the dog.

Liability and the property. A programme that invites dogs onto the property should be underwritten by a clear pet policy and waiver, signed at check in, that places responsibility for the animal's behaviour and health with the owner. Best practice, drawn from properties already operating at scale, includes a signed agreement assigning liability to the owner, an explicit acknowledgement that the guest accepts responsibility for any allergy or dietary sensitivity in ordering from the dog menu, and proof of current vaccination. The waiver is not hostility to the dog. It is the discipline that lets the property welcome the dog with confidence.

SECTION 7

# Building a Dog Menu Safely

Everything to this point has argued that a hotel should serve a dog menu. This section is the craft of doing it well, and it is what separates a programme that delights guests from one that harms their dogs. Hand it to the executive chef. It is drawn from the published guidance of the leading animal health authorities (the World Small Animal Veterinary Association, AAFCO, FEDIAF, the American Kennel Club, the ASPCA, VCA Hospitals, the Merck Veterinary Manual and the RSPCA, all listed in the sources). It is best practice, not veterinary advice for an individual animal, and it defers in every case to a qualified veterinarian and to local law.

## 7.1 The Golden Rule: It Is a Treat, Not a Meal

Start here, because it governs everything else. A dog dish prepared in a hotel kitchen, however wholesome, is a treat or a topper, not a substitute for the dog's balanced diet. A plate of chicken and rice is palatable and easy to digest, which is exactly why it is the most common hotel dog dish, but it is not complete or balanced.

An adult dog needs more than thirty essential nutrients in specific ratios every day: calcium and phosphorus in a narrow band, trace minerals such as zinc, iron, copper and selenium, and fat soluble vitamins and essential fatty acids that a plain protein and rice dish does not contain. Fed as a sole diet for more than a few days, an unbalanced home style meal causes deficiency. In a growing puppy it can cause irreversible skeletal harm. True complete and balanced nutrition requires laboratory formulation and testing that no hotel kitchen can replicate, and none should try.

The practical discipline that follows from this is the ten percent rule. Veterinary guidance holds that treats, which is what these dishes are, should never exceed ten percent of a dog's daily calorie intake. The remaining ninety percent should come from the dog's own balanced food. Every hotel dog menu should therefore carry, prominently, a version of this line: these dishes are intended as an occasional treat or topper and are not a substitute for your dog's complete and balanced diet. Stating this is not a legal formality. It is honest, it protects the animal, and, counter intuitively, it makes the menu more credible to the knowledgeable dog owner, not less.

## 7.2 Proteins: The Foundation

Protein is the base of every dish, and the rules are simple and firm.

Cook it thoroughly. The leading veterinary bodies advise against raw meat diets in a hospitality setting, and the reasoning is decisive in a hotel: raw meat, poultry and eggs carry Salmonella, E. coli, Listeria and Campylobacter, which threaten not only the dog but the kitchen staff who handle the food and the guests around it. Raw feeding is a debate

among owners for their own animals. In a commercial kitchen serving strangers' dogs, cooked is the only defensible standard.

Choose lean. Skinless, boneless chicken or turkey breast is the ideal, highly digestible and low in fat, with all skin and visible fat removed. Fully cooked eggs are an excellent protein with a complete amino acid profile, but never raw, because raw egg white binds biotin and carries Salmonella. Cooked, skinless, boneless fish such as salmon or fresh tuna is rich in beneficial omega 3 fatty acids, though fish should be limited to about twice a week because of mercury and sodium accumulation, and canned tuna only ever in water, never oil or brine.

Avoid fatty cuts. This is not a matter of taste but of pathology. Fatty meats, marbled beef, pork belly, bacon, ham, poultry skin and drippings, can trigger acute pancreatitis, a painful and sometimes fatal inflammation in which a sudden fat load causes the pancreas to begin digesting itself. Processed meats such as ham and bacon carry the additional problem of high salt and preservatives. A premium cut like a lean filet is fine and makes a luxurious dish. A rasher of bacon is not.

And never a cooked bone. Cooking makes bone brittle, and a chewed cooked bone splinters into sharp fragments that fracture teeth and perforate the gut. All bones come out before service, without exception.

## 7.3 Carbohydrates: Energy and Digestion

Carbohydrates are not strictly essential for an adult dog, but prepared well they add energy, fibre and bulk, and some actively aid digestion.

White rice is the workhorse, gentle on the stomach and the standard veterinary recommendation for a dog with a delicate digestion, though it should be used in moderation and avoided for a diabetic dog because it raises blood sugar quickly. Oats, cooked plain, are an excellent source of soluble fibre and are well tolerated. Sweet potato is nutritious and popular but must always be cooked and peeled, never raw, and used in moderation. Plain cooked pasta is harmless. Brown rice, perhaps surprisingly, is less suitable than white for a dog with any digestive sensitivity, because its intact fibrous coat is harder to digest.

One caution belongs here. A menu should not be built entirely around potato, sweet potato, peas and lentils to the exclusion of grain, because a body of veterinary investigation has examined a possible link between grain free diets heavy in those ingredients and a serious canine heart condition. For the great majority of dogs, ordinary grains such as rice and oats are safe and appropriate. Grain free should be a medical choice made by a veterinarian, not a default kitchen aesthetic.

## 7.4 Fruit and Vegetables: The Garnish, and the Danger

Vegetables and fruit add colour, fibre and nutrients at very low calorie cost, and they make a dish look considered. Several are excellent. Carrot, raw or lightly steamed, is nutritious and its crunch helps clean the teeth. Plain green beans are a fine low calorie filler. Plain cooked pumpkin, not pie filling, is a genuine digestive aid that helps with both constipation and loose stools. Blueberries and cranberries are safe, low in calories and rich in antioxidants. Plain peas and small amounts of cooked parsnip are fine, as are modest quantities of broccoli and other brassicas, though these last cause gas in quantity and are best used sparingly.

The dangers here are specific and must be known by name. The seeds and cores of apples and pears, and the pits of peaches, plums and avocados, contain compounds that release cyanide, and the pits are also choking and obstruction hazards, so cores, seeds and pits are always removed. Green tomatoes and the leaves and stems of the tomato plant contain a toxin that a ripe red tomato does not, so only ripe tomato in small amounts, never green. Green or sprouted potatoes carry a related toxin and are excluded. These are not marginal cautions. They are the difference between a garnish and a poisoning.

## 7.5 Fats, Broth and Herbs: Flavour Without Harm

Because a dog dish is unseasoned, flavour and richness come from a small number of safe additions used with restraint.

A little olive oil adds healthy fat and gloss to the coat, but only a little, because excess causes diarrhoea and adds pancreatitis risk. Coconut oil has its advocates for the same reasons but is very high in saturated fat, so use it sparingly and not at all for a dog with kidney disease. Plain bone broth is the single best flavour and moisture booster available: nutritious, appetite stimulating and soothing to the gut. It must be made correctly. Simmer marrow bones or poultry joints in plain water with no salt, onion, garlic or seasoning of any kind. Double strain it through a fine sieve to remove every fragment. Chill it, and scrape off the hardened fat before serving.

A few herbs are both safe and useful. Curly leaf parsley, used as a sparse garnish, freshens breath, though flat leaf and spring parsley should be avoided and parsley in general used lightly because it is a diuretic. Ginger in tiny amounts settles the stomach, but is a blood thinner and is kept away from pregnant dogs and any dog facing surgery. Rosemary, basil and thyme are safe in moderation and lend a kitchen a way to make a dog dish smell like cooking. Used with a light hand, these turn plain protein into something that reads as a real dish without endangering the animal.

## 7.6 The Never List

Some ingredients do not belong anywhere near a dog, in any quantity, and every member of kitchen staff should know them cold. This table is the non negotiable exclusion list, with the reason for each, because staff who understand why a rule exists keep it more reliably than staff who merely memorise it.

| Never use | Why |
|---|---|
| Onion, garlic, chives, leeks, shallots (raw, cooked or powdered) | Damage red blood cells and cause anaemia. Powders are the most concentrated and dangerous form. Garlic is roughly five times more toxic than onion. |
| Grapes, raisins, currants | Cause acute kidney failure, at doses as low as a single grape per few kilograms of body weight. |
| Xylitol and other sugar free sweeteners | Trigger a life threatening insulin release and, at higher doses, liver failure. Common in sugar free peanut butter, so any peanut butter used must be verified xylitol free. |
| Chocolate, coffee, caffeine | Cause heart and nervous system toxicity. Darker chocolate is more dangerous. |
| Macadamia nuts | Cause weakness, tremors and hyperthermia. |
| Cooked bones | Splinter and perforate or obstruct the gut, and fracture teeth. |
| Avocado flesh, skin and pit | Contains a toxin, is very high in fat, and the pit is an obstruction hazard. |
| Alcohol and raw yeast dough | Dough rises in the stomach and ferments into alcohol. Both cause serious poisoning. |
| Salt, and heavily salted foods | Cause sodium poisoning, with tremors and seizures at high intake. |
| Butter, cream, lard and fatty drippings | Trigger pancreatitis and digestive upset. |
| Blue cheese and mouldy food | Contain toxins that cause tremors and seizures. |

## 7.7 Portioning and Calorie Labelling

The ten percent rule is only enforceable if the kitchen knows the numbers, so the final piece of the craft is measurement. A dog's baseline daily energy need can be approximated from its body weight, and ten percent of that is the ceiling for the day's treats, the hotel dish included. In practice this produces small portions, which is exactly why hotel dog mains are a hundred grams and not a plateful. Veterinary guidance is notably conservative here, holding the daily treat allowance for a mid sized dog to a low fixed figure regardless of how large the dog is, precisely to stop the treats from crowding out the balanced diet that does the real nutritional work.

The operational answer is to print the calorie count of each dish on the menu, beside the price. It costs nothing, it lets an owner order responsibly, it demonstrates that the hotel takes the dog's health seriously, and it quietly reinforces that these are treats to be enjoyed in proportion. A menu that prices a dish and hides its calories is selling indulgence. A menu that prints both is practising hospitality.

## 7.8 A Model Menu

Drawing the whole paper together, a well built hotel dog menu might read as follows. The prices are set at the luxury tier documented in section 1, Kimpton Vero Beach's level rather than a resort's, because a hotel should price the dog's dinner to its own room rate; an upscale property would run them at roughly half. The calorie figures are illustrative. The composition follows the safety rules above: cooked lean proteins, gentle carbohydrates, safe vegetables, no seasoning, nothing from the never list.

| Dish | Composition | Approx. calories | Suggested price |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Morning Wag | Scrambled egg, plain cooked oats, blueberries | 120 | $18 |
| Chicken and Rice | Poached skinless chicken breast, 6 oz, white rice, steamed carrot | 220 | $28 |
| Catch of the Day | Poached salmon, 4 oz, sweet potato, green beans | 200 | $26 |
| The Filet | Grilled lean filet, 4 oz, white rice, steamed carrot | 190 | $38 |
| The Signature Filet, for the big dog | Grilled lean filet, 8 oz, white rice, steamed carrot, a spoon of plain broth | 380 | $58 |
| Pupcake | House baked pumpkin and xylitol free peanut butter cake | 90 | $12 |

Beneath it, the required line: *these dishes are an occasional treat and not a substitute for your dog's complete and balanced diet. Please tell us about any allergy or medical condition before ordering.* That one sentence is the difference between a menu that looks generous and one that is genuinely good hospitality.

SECTION 8

# The Operator's Blueprint

For a hotel deciding to build a dog menu, the sequence is short and the discipline matters more than the budget.

First, decide the supply model. A property with kitchen capacity and the will to run it safely keeps the most margin in house. A property that wants simplicity buys from a specialist supplier. A property with strong dog friendly credentials should pursue a brand sponsorship, which can take the cost of goods to zero and add a marketing partner. Most properties will begin in house and grow toward sponsorship as the programme proves itself.

Second, build the menu on the rules in section 7, not on culinary instinct. Cooked lean proteins, gentle carbohydrates, safe vegetables, safe fats and herbs in restraint, nothing from the never list, small portions, and the complete and balanced disclaimer in plain sight.

Third, run the kitchen for safety. A dedicated preparation area with its own boards, knives and pans, so that garlic and onion never cross into a dog dish. No pre made human stocks, which almost always hide onion, garlic and salt, so all broth is made from scratch. All produce washed, all seeds, pits and skins removed. Calorie counts printed on the menu.

Fourth, protect the property. A signed pet policy and waiver at check in, proof of vaccination, and a brief dietary intake so the kitchen knows about an allergy or a medical condition before it cooks.

Fifth, sell it early. Offer the menu at the point of booking and again at check in, not only in the room service folder, because the guest who knows the menu exists before they arrive is the guest who orders from it.

Do those five things and the dog food menu becomes what this paper has argued it is: a high margin, low cost, guest delighting product that keeps the traveller and their spend inside the building, deepens loyalty in a segment that returns more than any other, and does it all safely, for the guest, the dog and the property alike.

# Methodology

The market and behavioural figures in this paper draw on the Roch Dog research corpus, in particular the companion paper RDWP-03, The Economics of Dog Friendly Hospitality, and on third party market research and booking data. The menu prices come from the Roch Dog hotel dog menu archive: 90 published menus from 14 countries, 478 priced dishes, collected from the hotels' own in room dining PDFs and menu pages between 2024 and October 2026 and indexed dish by dish with the source for each. Each hotel was assigned a tier (ultra luxury, luxury, upscale, midscale, casual) from its market positioning. Prices are cited in their original currency with approximate dollar equivalents at October 2026 rates; medians are of main courses priced at ten dollars or more, excluding treats and drinks. Hotels that advertise a dog menu without publishing prices are counted in the search but not in the figures. The margin model is the Roch Dog estimate, built from those observed prices and from typical luxury kitchen procurement costs, with all assumptions stated in section 3; it is directional and is not any hotel's disclosed financial data. The nutritional and food safety guidance is distilled from the published guidance of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association, the Association of American Feed Control Officials, the European Pet Food Industry Federation, the American Kennel Club, the ASPCA, VCA Hospitals, the Merck Veterinary Manual and the RSPCA. It is best practice guidance, not veterinary advice for an individual animal, and it defers to a qualified veterinarian and to local food safety and animal health law.

## SOURCES

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17. Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO)

18. European Pet Food Industry Federation (FEDIAF)

19. American Kennel Club (AKC) nutrition guidance

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CONTACT

E: research@rochdog.com

US: 626 88 44 007

UK: +44 1992 364 007

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Roch Dog is an independent certification body. We assess, certify, and verify hotels against the Roch Dog Friendly Standard (RDFS-02). The standard, framework, and supporting reference documents are published at rochstandard.com.

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