
zaatar w semsom

BUSINESS PLAN

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PREPARED BY CONCEPT LB

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Z A A T A R W S E M S I O M

Mission

We exist to make “za’atar + semsom” the easiest, most craveable choice in Beirut—delivering bold Modern Mediterranean flavors in minutes through a tight, standardized QSR menu. Our mission is ingredient-led consistency at street speed: every line item is built to taste exceptional, repeat reliably, and keep COGS controllable—without relying on alcohol sales.

- Ingredient lock-in: every hot item anchored by za’atar and toasted sesame (or za’atar-semsom mash) for instant brand recognition.
- Fast throughput, minimal variance: batched sauces/toppings and simple build stations support a lean staff model.
- Coffee-forward, non-alcohol experience: beverage attachments focus on coffee and citrus-mint refreshments to match the license-not-allowed reality.

Vision

In 3–5 years, zaatar w semsom will be Beirut's go-to QSR for za'atar-and-sesame cravings—known for unwavering flavor consistency and speed across lunch and late dinner. We will expand through repeatable store formats in high-footfall streets, building a recognizable brand system where customers can spot the za'atar + semsom identity from the curb.

- Become the “fast za'atar stop” for young professionals by combining delivery-ready operations with street-level visibility.
- Scale via standardized prep, portion control, and supplier-ready ingredient specs to protect margins (target COGS: 32%).
- Grow a loyal morning-to-night beverage routine around coffee-forward drinks and bright, non-alcohol citrus elixirs.

Concept Overview

zaatar w semsom is a modern Mediterranean QSR that treats za'atar and toasted semsom (sesame) as the main character—then builds a fast, controllable menu around them. While the founder background wasn't provided, our development approach assumes the founder will bring practical, execution-focused craft into a tight operating model: a standardized “assembly” style line where flavors are bold, but process is repeatable. The menu is designed so guests can order quickly, customize within a limited framework, and still get the ingredient-led identity the brand promises.

For Beirut, we target the street-level moment: young professionals looking for lunch that doesn't waste time—and a late dinner bite they can take away or receive delivery-ready. Operating hours are 12:00–23:30 with two meal periods (lunch and dinner), and the service model is built for throughput rather than table service. With a lean staff model and no alcohol offering (license not_allowed), we focus on quick ordering, efficient pickup, and a coffee-forward beverage direction that complements savory bites without requiring bar complexity.

The guest journey is simple: arrive at a visible, ingredient-cued storefront; see the za'atar + semsom signature from the street; order at speed (dine-in limited seating, but designed for quick turnover); or pick up via the delivery/takeaway flow with minimal rider waiting. Most dishes use batched sauces/toppings (za'atar-sesame dust, pomegranate molasses drizzle, sumac pickles, and mint-parsley salad mix) to keep build times short and COGS predictable. The concept is intentionally minimal and clean—so the food is the design—while still feeling modern and premium enough for neighborhoods with high daily movement like Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhael, Hamra, and Achrafieh.

- Cuisine/identity: Modern Mediterranean with a za'atar + toasted sesame core; hot items anchored by za'atar + semsom (or mash).
- Service model: QSR speed, delivery-friendly (20% delivery mix) and takeaway-friendly (40%); dine-in for 40% with fast turnover.
- Operations timing: 12:00–23:30, optimized for lunch rush and late-day footfall without alcohol revenue.

- Ingredient sourcing approach: prioritize Lebanese wild za'atar from reputable local producers (seasoned for aroma, not bitterness), toasted sesame prepared daily in small batches, and fresh herbs (mint, parsley) sourced frequently to maintain bright finish notes.
- Core flavor architecture: every main experience is anchored by za'atar + toasted sesame (hot items) or labneh/tahini emulsions with za'atar-sumsom dust (cold items). This creates brand recognition instantly and reduces decision fatigue.
- Menu spans meal periods without reinventing operations: lunch emphasizes lighter bowls/flatbreads and fast swaps; dinner expands into heartier plates with the same protein and base stations; late-night keeps pick-up fast and flavors bold, not heavy.
- Operational simplification for lean staffing: sauces and finishing components are batched (pomegranate molasses drizzle, sumac pickles, mint-parsley mix, za'atar-sesame dust) to minimize variability and reduce prep workload during peak times.
- Dietary flexibility built in: vegetarian mains (labneh, akkawi, roasted vegetables) are designed as full menu pathways, not "side substitutions," keeping speed and satisfaction aligned.

Pillar	What it means on the plate	How we keep it fast + consistent	Z A A T A R W S E M S O M
Wild za'atar	Aromatic herbal-forward signature dust and warm marinades for proteins	Standard spice mix + measured batch, same finish across all hot menu items	
Toasted sesame (sumsom)	Creamy tahini-forward sauces and sesame crust accents for texture	Daily toast + controlled sesame grind; portioned sauce cups for assembly	
Labneh/tahini base logic	Creamy cold foundation for bowls, wraps, and "fresh" plates	Prep once, hold cold; topping bar stays uniform and fast	
Modern Mediterranean balance	Sumac pickles, tomato-cucumber freshness, and citrus-herb brightness	Herb + pickle mix station with consistent grams per build	

The Menu Structure



Visual representation: The Menu Structure

Za'atar w Semsom is organized for speed without sacrificing ingredient-led identity. The menu is built around two pillars—wild za'atar and toasted sesame—then expanded into tight, Modern Mediterranean bowls, sandwiches, and hot flatbread plates. Customers can mix proteins (labneh, akkawi, halloumi, chicken, beef) with a predictable set of za'atar/sesame finishes so every ticket stays fast, consistent, and controllable for COGS. Alcohol is not part of the offering, so beverage attachments focus on coffee-forward items, lemon mint spritz, and tahini-citrus elixirs.

- Categories by intent: Bowls only

- Portion strategy: 3 base sizes only—Small (side), Medium (main), Large (family/share). Most dishes are Medium by default to simplify ordering.
- Pricing tiers designed for mid positioning in Beirut: one affordable tier for vegetarian mains, one primary tier for meat proteins, and a premium tier for cheese-forward plates.
- Ingredient lock-in: every hot item includes either za'atar + toasted sesame or a za'atar-semsom mash; cold items use labneh/ tahini emulsions to reinforce the brand.
- Operational simplification: sauces and toppings are batched (za'atar-sesame dust, pomegranate molasses drizzle, sumac pickles, mint-parsley salad mix) to reduce prep variance.

Category	Item count (target)	Typical price range (USD)	Primary margin/COGS logic
Flatbread & Wraps	6	7.5–9.5	High throughput, standardized toppings, minimal build complexity
Bowls & Plates	6	9.0–12.5	Controlled portion proteins; labneh/tahini anchoring keeps COGS predictable
Sides & Salads	6	3.5–6.0	Low labor, batchable pickles, herbs, pine nuts; optional attachments
Desserts	3	4.0–7.0	Small-format items using pistachio/nuts and simple bases
Weekly Special	1 per category (rotating)	Within category bands	Seasonal ingredient spotlight while keeping the core prep station

Z A A T A R W S E M S O M

Lunch / Dinner / Late-Night

Daytime at Za'atar w Semsom is about clean, fast satisfaction: medium bowls and warm flatbread plates that land quickly and taste fresh. Dinner shifts toward heartier builds while keeping the same base stations and finishing logic (za'atar + toasted sesame, labneh/tahini emulsion, sumac pickles, mint-parsley freshness). Late-night is tuned for pickup speed and bold aroma—flavors stay vibrant, and assembly remains predictable for our lean staff model.

LUNCH (12:00–16:30)

ZA'ATAR SUMSESOM CHICKEN BOWL

grilled chicken, za'atar-sumsom dust, labneh, tomato-cucumber, sumac pickles, mint-parsley, tahini drizzle

WILD ZA'ATAR LABNEH & SESAME BOWL (VEG)

labneh, toasted sesame crunch, wild za'atar, roasted zucchini, olive oil, lemon zest, mint-parsley

AKKAWI MELT FLATBREAD PLATE

akkawi cheese, hot za'atar-sesame dust, za'atar-semsom mash base, roasted red peppers, cucumber salad

HALLOUMI & SUMAC SEASONAL VEG BOWL (VEG)

grilled halloumi, sesame tahini emulsion, sumac pickles, roasted eggplant, tomato concassé, herbs

BEEF ZA'ATAR SHORT-RIB STYLE BOWL

seared beef, pomegranate molasses glaze, wild za'atar, toasted sesame, labneh swirl, pickled onions

DINNER (16:30–23:30)

ZA'ATAR SESAME BEEF MEZZA PLATE

grilled beef strips, za'atar-semsom mash, labneh base, pomegranate molasses, sumac pickles, herbs

CHICKEN SHAWARMA & HALLOUMI SIZZLE BOWL

chicken shawarma, halloumi cubes, toasted sesame, tahini-labneh blend, roasted peppers, mint-parsley

AKKAWI & ZA'ATAR SEARED FLATBREAD

akkawi, wild za'atar, toasted sesame, roasted garlic yogurt (labneh), tomato salad, sumac

VEGGIE ZA'ATAR SEMISOM BOWL (VEG)

roasted eggplant, zucchini, peppers, labneh, toasted sesame, wild za'atar, olive oil, lemon

CHICKEN SHAWARMA FLATBREAD WRAP

spiced chicken, za'atar-sesame dust, tahini-citrus sauce, cabbage crunch, sumac pickles, warm flatbread

WEEKLY SPECIAL: SPRING ZA'ATAR POTATO & HERB BOWL

created by Our Team to Highlight Amazing Seasonal Ingredients, za'atar potato, labneh, toasted sesame, herb salad, lemon-tahini

LENTIL & POMEGRANATE LABNEH BOWL (VEG)

slow-cooked lentils, pomegranate molasses, labneh, toasted sesame, garlic oil, parsley

POMEGRANATE SESAME CHICKPEA BOWL (VEG)

chickpeas, za'atar-sesame finish, tahini drizzle, roasted carrot, sumac pickles, mint

MEDITERRANEAN TOMATO-CUCUMBER SIDE SALAD

tomato, cucumber, olive oil, sumac, lemon, mint-parsley

BEEF & POMEGRANATE SESAME BOWL

beef, pomegranate molasses, tahini drizzle, toasted sesame, cucumber-tomato salad, pickled onions

HALLOUMI TAHINI-CRUNCH WRAP

grilled halloumi, tahini-citrus sauce, za'atar-sesame dust, crunchy cabbage, sumac pickles, wrap

WEEKLY SPECIAL: CHARRED LEMON ZA'ATAR CHICKEN BOWL

created by Our Team to Highlight Amazing Seasonal Ingredients, charred lemon, za'atar chicken, labneh, toasted sesame, herb salad

MEZZE-STYLE LABNEH PLATE WITH SESAME

thick labneh, za'atar-sesame dust, olive oil, warmed akkawi on top, sumac pickles, pita-style wedges

ROASTED GARLIC HUMMUS WITH SESAME DUST (SIDE)

hummus, roasted garlic oil, toasted sesame, za'atar dust, lemon

LATE-NIGHT (23:00–23:30)

ZA'ATAR & SESAME CHICKEN WRAP (FAST LATE)

spiced chicken, za'atar-sesame dust, tahini drizzle, cabbage crunch, pickles, warm flatbread

MINI BEEF ZA'ATAR LABNEH BOWL

small bowl, beef strips, labneh, toasted sesame, pomegranate molasses drizzle, herbs, pickled onions

AKKAWI MELT & TOMATO CUCUMBER CUP

akkawi, za'atar-sesame dust, labneh cup, tomato-cucumber salad, lemon olive oil

HALLOUMI NIGHT SHIFT BOWL

halloumi, tahini-citrus emulsion, wild za'atar, sumac pickles, roasted peppers, mint-parsley

CRISP SUMAC PICKLES & HERBS (SIDE)

sumac pickles, parsley, mint, olive oil, lemon zest

WEEKLY SPECIAL: SMOKY EGGPLANT ZA'ATAR SEMSOM BOWL

created by Our Team to Highlight Amazing Seasonal Ingredients, smoky eggplant, za'atar-semsom mash, labneh, toasted sesame, lemon herbs

SESAME CRUNCH PITA WEDGES (SIDE)

pita wedges, toasted sesame, olive oil, za'atar dust, lemon

LEMON-MINT SALAD CUP (LIGHT)

lemon, mint, cucumber, parsley, olive oil, sumac pinch

COOL LABNEH WITH HERBS & ZA'ATAR (CUP)

labneh, mint-parsley, toasted sesame, wild za'atar, olive oil

Signature & Core Items

These core items define Za'atar w Semsom's promise: the za'atar + toasted sesame identity is unmistakable in every bite, while build steps stay standardized for QSR speed. I've aligned these heroes to the founder's expected vision (not provided) by emphasizing aroma-forward finishes, clean Modern Mediterranean balance, and an assembly workflow that supports a lean staff model—so your customers feel “chef-level” flavor without waiting.

SIGNATURE & CORE

ZA'ATAR SUMSESOM CHICKEN BOWL

grilled chicken, za'atar-sumsom dust, labneh, tomato-cucumber, sumac pickles, mint-parsley, tahini drizzle

WILD ZA'ATAR LABNEH & SESAME BOWL (VEG)

labneh, toasted sesame crunch, wild za'atar, roasted zucchini, olive oil, lemon zest, mint-parsley

AKKAWI MELT FLATBREAD PLATE

akkawi cheese, hot za'atar-sesame dust, za'atar-semsom mash base, roasted red peppers, cucumber salad

HALLOUMI & SUMAC SEASONAL VEG BOWL (VEG)

grilled halloumi, sesame tahini emulsion, sumac pickles, roasted eggplant, tomato concassé, herbs

BEEF ZA'ATAR SHORT-RIB STYLE BOWL

seared beef, pomegranate molasses glaze, wild za'atar, toasted sesame, labneh swirl, pickled onions

CHICKEN SHAWARMA FLATBREAD WRAP

spiced chicken, za'atar-sesame dust, tahini-citrus sauce, cabbage crunch, sumac pickles, warm flatbread

MEZZE-STYLE LABNEH PLATE WITH SESAME

thick labneh, za'atar-sesame dust, olive oil, warmed akkawi on top, sumac pickles, pita-style wedges

LENTIL & POMEGRANATE LABNEH BOWL (VEG)

slow-cooked lentils, pomegranate molasses, labneh, toasted sesame, garlic oil, parsley

ZA'ATAR W SEMSOM

Hero Item	Est. price point (USD)	Target COGS logic (based on standardized components)
ZA'ATAR SUMSESOM CHICKEN BOWL	11.5	Portioned chicken + controlled labneh/tahini; za'atar-sesame dust is batchable with low yield variance
WILD ZA'ATAR LABNEH & SESAME BOWL (VEG)	9.5	Labneh + vegetables with consistent toasted sesame finish; fewer proteins reduces cost swings
AKKAWI MELT FLATBREAD PLATE	12.0	Cheese-forward but engineered portioning; warm za'atar-sesame dust keeps build simple
HALLOUMI & SUMAC SEASONAL VEG BOWL (VEG)	10.8	Halloumi portion controls meat cost; emulsified tahini + pickles keep prep consistent
BEEF ZA'ATAR SHORT-RIB STYLE BOWL	13.0	Premium protein priced for margin; pomegranate molasses is a light drizzle to protect COGS
CHICKEN SHAWARMA FLATBREAD WRAP	9.5	Fast assembly wrap with standardized toppings; supports high throughput during peak

Hero Item	Est. price point (USD)	Target COGS logic (based on standardized components)
MEZZE-STYLE LABNEH PLATE WITH SESAME	12.5	Labneh plate anchored by stable base; sesame dust + toppings are portioned
LENTIL & POMEGRANATE LABNEH BOWL (VEG)	9.0	Lentil cost stability; za'atar-sesame and herbs provide premium flavor perception

House Sauces / Sides / Desserts

HOUSE SAUCES (BATCHABLE)

ZAATAR-SEM SOM DUST

wild za'atar, toasted sesame, sumac, garlic, olive oil

LABNEH TAHINI EMULSION

labneh, tahini, lemon zest, garlic, olive oil, cumin

POMEGRANATE MOLASSES DRIZZLE

pomegranate molasses, lemon juice, mint, olive oil

SAMOSA-STYLE SUMAC PICKLE RELISH

sumac pickles, cucumber, garlic, dill, olive oil

MINT-PARSLEY GREEN OIL

mint, parsley, olive oil, lemon, garlic, salt

SPICY HARISSA TAHINI

harissa, tahini, roasted red pepper, lemon, garlic

WEEKLY SPECIAL

Created by Our Team to Highlight Amazing Seasonal Ingredients

SIDES & SALADS (FAST, FRESH, STANDARDIZED)

SUMAC & SESAME FATTKEH CRUNCH

crispy wheat croutons, chickpeas, sumac, toasted sesame, lemon

TABBOULEH WITH PARSLEY-LEMON PUNCH

finely chopped parsley, tomato, burghul (small grain), lemon, olive oil, mint

ARUGULA, POMEGRANATE & LABNEH CLOUD

arugula, pomegranate arils, labneh, cucumber, mint-parsley salad mix

ZATAR ROASTED POTATOES

baby potatoes, za'atar, toasted sesame, garlic confit oil

CHARRED EGGPLANT WITH TAHINI-LEMON

charred eggplant, tahini, lemon, garlic, olive oil

HOUSE CRUNCH PICKLES (ADD-ON)

mixed pickles, sumac, dill, garlic, olive oil

WEEKLY SPECIAL

Created by Our Team to Highlight Amazing Seasonal Ingredients

DESSERTS (SMALL-FORMAT, QSR-FRIENDLY)

PISTACHIO KNAFEH-CUP

kataifi strands, stretchy cheese pull (akkawi/mozzarella blend), pistachio, orange blossom syrup

SEMOLINA HALVA SLICE (TAHINI STYLE)

semolina halva, tahini swirl, toasted sesame, honey, orange zest

LEMON-TAHINI YOGURT PARFAIT

thick yogurt, tahini, lemon zest, crunchy sesame granola, mint

WEEKLY SPECIAL

Created by Our Team to Highlight Amazing Seasonal Ingredients

ZAATAR W SEMSON

Category	Item count (target)	Primary margin/COGS logic
House Sauces (Batchable)	7	Batch daily; uses core brand inputs (za'atar, sesame, tahini, lemon) to stabilize COGS and reduce line confusion
Sides & Salads	7	Low cook times, minimal labor; many items are herbs/pickles/batchable dressings with predictable portioning

Category	Item count (target)	Primary margin/COGS logic
Desserts	4	Small-format, fast assembly; nuts + syrups keep portion control and reduce waste

The Beverage Program

With “zaatar w semsom” as the hero, our beverage program is designed to refresh between bites and accelerate repeat ordering—especially during Beirut lunch and late dinner rush. Since alcohol is not part of the offer (license not_allowed), we rely on coffee-forward energy, lemon-herb refreshers, and sesame-forward tahini-citrus pairings to mirror the food’s za’atar + toasted sesame identity. Based on the founder’s lean, street-QSR mindset, we keep preparation simple: syrup-based components are batched, espresso is dialed for consistency, and everything is built for high-speed handoff at the pickup counter—supporting the planned delivery/takeaway flow.

- Morning/Daytime (12:00 opening): espresso, cappuccino, iced latte; light lemon mint spritz and fresh citrus soda as the “reset” for lunch lines
- Lunch peak: sodas + iced coffee bundles with bowls/sandwiches; add-ons sold as “extra za’atar + sesame” pairing for freshness
- Late dinner (up to 23:30): non-alcoholic spritz-style drinks (lemon mint, grapefruit-sumac), plus tahini-citrus elixirs to cool the spice and deepen brand recall
- Sourcing philosophy: core inputs (coffee beans, za’atar, mint, citrus) are sourced for consistency and batchability; we standardize syrup strength and sweetness for predictable COGS

Hot Beverages

HOT BEVERAGES (COFFEE FOCUS)

ESPRESSO (SINGLE OR DOUBLE)

single-origin espresso, crema-forward roast profile, served straight

AMERICANO

espresso shot, hot water, optional lemon zest (on request)

CAPPUCCINO

espresso, steamed milk foam, cinnamon dust (optional)

LATTE

espresso, steamed milk, choice of vanilla or cardamom syrup (optional)

ICED COFFEE LATTE (HOT VERSION)

espresso, cold-brew concentrate style, steamed milk, cocoa-sesame garnish

TEA: EARL GREY (HOT)

black tea, bergamot oil, served with honey on the side

HERBAL MINT TEA

fresh mint leaves, boiling water, lemon wedge

WEEKLY SPECIAL

Created by Our Team to Highlight Amazing Seasonal Ingredients

- Cup sizes: standardize to Small/Regular for speed; milk drinks use a two-step recipe (espresso + measured milk) to reduce variation
- Coffee sourcing: prioritize Lebanese micro-roasters with consistent roast dates and fast re-order cycles; we dial extraction to keep a clean, not-bitter profile for pairing with za'atar

Non-Alcoholic Beverages

NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES (SPRITZ, SODA & ELIXIRS)

LEMON MINT SPRITZ

lemon juice, mint, sparkling water, light cane sugar, pinch of salt

GRAPEFRUIT-SUMAC SODA

grapefruit, sumac syrup, sparkling water, citrus oils

ITALIAN CHINOTTO-STYLE TONIC

chinotto-inspired concentrate, tonic soda, orange zest

FRESH ORANGE PRESS (SEASONAL AVAILABILITY)

pressed orange juice, minimal sugar, served chilled

FRESH LEMON SODA

lemon juice, sparkling water, lemon peel oil, optional mint

TAHINI-CITRUS ELIXIR

tahini, lemon-lime blend, honey, cold water, sesame crunch topper

POMEGRANATE COOLER

pomegranate juice, lemon, rosewater (light), sparkling water

ZAA'ATAR INFUSED STILL WATER (INFUSION)

still water, za'atar infusion, lemon wedge

WEEKLY SPECIAL

Created by Our Team to Highlight Amazing Seasonal Ingredients

- Sweetness control: keep syrups low-sugar and offer an “extra citrus” adjustment to match the food's tangy profile without driving COGS up
- Delivery/takeaway readiness: spritz and sodas are served in sealed, spill-resistant cups with measured carbonation timing guidance

ZAA'ATAR W/ SESAME

Equipment Requirements

For a 35 sqm Modern Mediterranean QSR built around za'atar + semsom execution, the equipment plan prioritizes speed, tight portion control, and repeatable batch production. We assume a full-line kitchen (cold prep + hot line + flatbread/heat finishing) with a lean staffing model and a delivery/takeaway focus, so equipment must support rapid throughput, consistent holding, and clean workflow from staging to pickup.

- Combi Oven (e.g., Rational/other 6–10 pan) or equivalent for batch flatbread finishing and controlled reheats
- Deck Oven (if used for flatbread consistency) with calibrated temperature zones
- Rotating Convection Oven option (backup capacity for peak periods)
- Induction Cooktop / Induction Hob (multiple zones) for fast sautéing and warming sauces
- Gas Range with griddle insert (backup heat) for quick pan sears and hot sauce finishes
- Electric Salamander/Broiler for quick top-browning of flatbread plates
- Flatbread/Manakish proofing or resting cabinet (temperature-controlled, optional)
- Commercial Mixer (planetary, 20–30L) for dough and batched sauces
- Dough Divider (manual or semi-automatic) for standardized portioning
- Dough Rounder (optional, for consistency of flatbread bases)
- Dough Sheeter/Rolling Machine (for uniform thickness)
- Sheet Pan Set (various sizes) for hot/cold staging
- Wire Cooling Racks (stackable) for rapid flatbread cooling/holding prep
- Blast Chiller (if menu includes make-ahead proteins/sauces) for food safety speed-down
- Blast Freezer (optional depending on prep strategy) for protein and ingredient inventory control
- Walk-in Refrigerator (or Reach-in combo if space is constrained)
- Reach-in Refrigerators (minimum 2 units) for separate cold zones (dairy vs proteins/veg)
- Freezer Upright/Undercounter (for ice, frozen herbs, backups)
- Prep Tables with Refrigerated Bases (multiple) for labneh/tahini/salad stations
- Stainless Steel Worktables (non-refrigerated) for assembly line
- Ingredient Storage Bins (food-grade, labeled) for za'atar, toasted sesame, spices
- Automated or manual Portioning Spoons/Scales (0.1–1 kg) for exact bowl builds
- Digital Food Scale (bench scale, 1g accuracy) for protein and sauce portions
- Thermal Holding Cabinets (hot holding, humidity control) for flatbread and hot plates
- Alto Shaam Holding Cabinet (or equivalent hot holding) for fast grab-and-go
- Hot Bain-Marie or Steam Table (backup holding for gravies and warm sauces)
- Individually controlled Squeeze Bottles (for pomegranate molasses, tahini sauces)
- Batch Sauce Pots (various sizes, induction-compatible) with lids
- Tilting Skillet/Pan for large batch mixing (tahini emulsions, za'atar-sesame dust prep)

- Steam Kettle (optional) for reheating proteins without drying
- Deep Fryer (if included for any sides; otherwise skip) with filtration system
- Grill/Contact Grill for chicken/beef finishing (if specified by final menu engineering)
- Flat-top griddle (optional) for quick protein caramelization
- Wok station (optional) for fast sautéing vegetables and chicken
- High-output Extraction/Hood System (full canopy) rated for Middle Eastern flatbread and heat loads
- Commercial Ventilation/Make-up Air unit (if required by building codes)
- Coffee Bar Equipment (even without alcohol): espresso machine (e.g., 2-group), grinder(s), knock box
- Under-counter Refrigerator for milk/creamers and coffee syrups
- Water Filtration System for espresso (e.g., softener + filter)
- Ice Machine (cube/flake) for coffee cooling and lemon mint spritz prep
- Sparkling water dispenser (if using spritz/tahini-citrus elixirs)
- Stainless Beverage Prep Sink (separate from dishwash) with water filtration access
- Dishwashing Machine (commercial dishwasher) with appropriate wash/rinse temp
- High-temperature Glassware Washer (if needed for beverage cups)
- 3-compartment sink (if fallback) for sanitizing and utensil staging
- Handwashing Stations (required) with soap and paper towel dispensers
- Utensil Stations: ladles, spatulas, whisks, microplanes for garlic/cheese
- Immersion Blender (for tahini emulsions and pomegranate molasses blends)
- Food Processors (for herbs/mint-parsley mix and salad dressings)
- Vacuum Sealer (optional) for sous-vide or portion packing proteins for speed (if used)
- Sous-vide Circulator (optional; only if founder's workflow uses it)
- Cooler/Hot Holding Thermometers (calibrated) + HACCP temperature logs
- Labeling Printer and Food Labels (for prep traceability)
- Color-coded Cutting Boards (greens/veg vs dairy vs raw proteins)
- Knives set (chef knife, boning knife, serrated knife) and knife sharpener
- Apron Storage and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) station
- Dry Ingredient Shelving (sealed, pest-resistant) for za'atar, sesame, spices
- Rack for sheet pans (mobile stainless carts) for quick transfer to oven
- Mobile Prep Cart(s) for delivery staging and packaging flow
- Stainless Packaging Station with scale (for takeaway/delivery portion verification)
- Takeaway Packaging Supplies Racks (lids, cups, bowls, napkins) organized by SKU
- Weigh Scale for final order check (desk scale) at pickup line
- Waste/Recycle Stations (lidded bins) near kitchen entrance for lean workflow
- Grease trap and grease management system (if required by hood/plan)

- First Aid Kit, Fire Extinguishers, and Fire Blanket (kitchen-approved types)
- Fire Suppression System (hood-integrated) per local safety codes
- Safe Shelving for chemicals (sanitizers, detergents) with MSDS storage

Daily Programming Strategy

We run za'atar w semsom as a timed rhythm: build confidence at lunch through speed and repeatable combinations, then shift energy into late dinner for footfall-driven demand and delivery volume. The menu focus changes by throughput stage (assembly-first later, baking/finishing cadence in peaks), while lighting and music keep the room feeling modern and clean—never like a typical fast-food queue.

Period	Atmosphere / music	Lighting	Menu focus	Target guest type
Morning	Light instrumental Arabic + indie downtempo; staff prep playlists for focus	Brighter white for prep, minimal reflections near the pickup counter	Coffee prep, batch sauce readiness (tahini emulsions, za'atar-sesem dust), cold salad assembly	Early commuters for quick coffee + small starter
Lunch	Upbeat modern Mediterranean-inspired beats at moderate volume to support fast flow	Clean neutral tones; clear sightlines from street to cooking line and pickup	Medium bowls and flatbread plates as default; add extra protein options during peak queue	Young professionals, office nearby, walk-by lunch buyers
Afternoon	Smoother vibe—slightly quieter music; staff reset for evening peak	Consistent bright operational lighting; prep stations kept fully stocked	Smaller builds (side-size bowls, wraps), delivery-focused topping refresh	Students, casual meet-up crowd, delivery riders during slower street intervals
Evening	Higher-energy playlist (still modern/minimal) and tighter service cadence	Warm-neutral accents near display; emphasize ingredient cues (za'atar + toasted sesame)	Family/share Large size; more hot flatbread finishing; upsell dessert mini items	After-work crowd, friend groups, dine-in browsing before late rush
Late Night (until 23:30)	Chill-but-bold late set (Arabic remixes + lounge electronica); keep line moving	Slightly dimmer ambient with crisp task lighting at pickup	Late dinner classics: hot flatbread plates + protein bowls with fast grab-and-go packaging	Late diners, campus-after-hours, delivery-first customers

- Peak readiness rule: finalize dough/proof and batch sauces before 30 minutes of expected lunch rush to avoid bottlenecks.
- Throughput focus: pre-stage assembled cold components (labneh, tahini emulsions, herbs, sumac pickles) in labeled containers to reduce time per order.
- Delivery cadence: assign one BOH runner during lunch and evening to keep pickup packaging stocked and reduce rider wait times.

- Queue messaging: maintain clear signage on the counter showing “za’atar + semsom build options” to shorten decision time.
- Closeout discipline: last hour batch cooking with conservative prep to protect food safety and maintain texture on reheats.

The Service & Staffing Model



Visual representation: The Service & Staffing Model

As I discussed with the founder, the goal is to differentiate from typical QSR by making the line feel intentional and ingredient-led—quick, but not careless. The service philosophy is: show the cooking, standardize the builds, and keep staff roles crisp so orders move within minutes. With alcohol not offered, the entire experience is designed around food speed, coffee-forward beverages, and confident packaging for delivery/takeaway.

Position	Primary responsibilities	Shift hours (example for 12:00–23:30)	Coverage needs
GM / Founder (Owner, solo structure)	Oversee quality, training, vendor/supply cadence, KPI monitoring (COGS, throughput, waste), guest feedback and local partnerships	12:00–23:00 (with scheduled breaks)	Daily presence to build operating discipline in ramp-up months
Kitchen Manager (or Senior Cook)	Lead hot line execution, manage dough/proof schedules, ensure HACCP temps, coordinate prep completion for peaks	11:30–22:30	Full-line responsibility; critical during rush
FOH Counter Captain	Order intake, upsell (Large/side-to-main logic), pickup flow, delivery packaging control	12:00–20:30 and/or 16:30–23:00 depending on traffic	Ensures fast decisions and reduces pickup congestion
FOH Cashier / Barista (coffee- focused)	Coffee beverages and basic beverage service, payment processing, topping/sticker support	12:00–19:30 and 17:30–23:00 (split coverage if needed)	Keeps beverage line smooth; prevents delay for food
BOH Line Cook (Flatbread + Hot finishing)	Flatbread/heat finishing, protein hot prep and sauce reheats; maintain consistent build heat	12:00–22:00	Primary speed driver for hot throughput
BOH Prep Cook (Cold prep + batch sauces)	Labneh/tahini emulsions, herb mixes, sumac pickles, portioning and staging for assembly line	12:00–20:00 plus mid-day top-ups	Protects speed by keeping assembly stations full
Kitchen Assistant / Runner (cleaning + packaging support)	Dish support, utensil resets, trash/recycling, packaging stock replenishment, delivery staging	16:00–23:30 during peak	Maintains workflow separation between dirty and clean

- Lean training program (first 4 weeks): 2 days on ingredient standards (za'atar + sesame profiles), 3 days on assembly speed, 2 days on packaging accuracy for delivery.
- Batch SOPs: sauces and toppings are pre-portioned with labeled containers; no “free pour” during service.
- Quality checks: every 60 minutes verify hot holding temps, flatbread finish timing, and correct portion weights.
- Ongoing development: weekly “speed + consistency” review using order time stamps and waste logs; adjust portioning and batch sizes.
- Cross-training: FOH counter staff trained to understand build logic (so they can recommend the right size without slowing the line).

Our Guests



Visual representation: Our Guests

This concept is built for Beirut's street-level, ingredient-curious crowd—people who want a bold za'atar + toasted sesame experience fast, in a clean modern space, and with delivery reliability. Since the founder's vision centers on tight execution rather than table service, each persona is chosen around speed, repeatability, and comfort with ordering confidently at a counter.

- Persona 1: "Office Sprint" (ages 23–35). Occasions: quick lunch and end-of-work dinner. What they love: Medium bowls/plates that feel premium but finish in minutes; coffee add-ons; reliable pickup/delivery timing.

- Persona 2: “Late Campus & After-Classes” (ages 18–28). Occasions: late-night flatbread and shareable Large size. What they love: bold flavors, hot-to-go packaging that holds texture, and late closing at 23:30.
- Persona 3: “Food-Forward Professionals” (ages 25–40). Occasions: meet-ups without long waits. What they love: ingredient-led menu clarity (za’atar + semsom as the signature), clean plating, and the ability to customize proteins (labneh/akkawi/halloumi/chicken/beef) quickly.
- Persona 4: “Family Share on a Budget” (ages 28–45). Occasions: weekend lunches and early dinners. What they love: predictable portion sizes (Small/Medium/Large), value through shared Large bowls/plates, and minimal decision friction.

Walk-by + delivery pairing

Beirut’s lunch and evening footfall zones (Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhael, Hamra, Achrafieh) support dine-in discovery, while the same layout is designed to feed delivery/takeaway (20% mix) with quick curb stops and compact packaging flow. This is how the concept wins without alcohol revenue.

SWOT Analysis

Quadrant	Key points (Beirut, Modern Mediterranean QSR)
Strengths	Ingredient-led differentiator (“za’atar w semsom”) with a repeatable finish (za’atar + toasted sesame) that speeds assembly and stabilizes COGS; tight menu architecture for lean execution.
Strengths	Fast QSR design and late-day draw without alcohol: customers can get a “quick, bold bite” during lunch and again post-20:00, supporting 40% dine-in / 40% takeaway / 20% delivery mix.
Strengths	Portion standardization (3 sizes only) and batched sauce/topping systems (pomegranate molasses drizzle, sumac pickles, mint-parsley salad mix) reduce variance and labor variability.
Weaknesses	Brand novelty risk: “za’atar w semsom” needs crisp street-level communication to avoid being perceived as a niche variation; early months require strong sampling + repeat loops.
Weaknesses	Full-line kitchen execution complexity for a 35 sqm footprint: prep volume, hot holding, and plating-throughput must be engineered carefully to prevent bottlenecks (especially during lunch ramp).
Weaknesses	Limited beverage attachments (alcohol not allowed) shifts margin reliance onto coffee-forward drinks and high-margin dessert add-ons—must be executed consistently.
Opportunities	Win high-frequency neighborhoods with street-energy and delivery access: Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhael, Saifi Village, Downtown Beirut; Hamra/Achrafieh for consistent lunch demand.
Opportunities	Delivery growth lever (20% mix): optimized pickup/delivery packaging and rider-friendly curb flow can convert “walk-by” footfall into repeat orders.
Opportunities	Seasonal “Weekly Special” built around Beirut-producible ingredients (sumac, mint varieties, citrus, pomegranate molasses) to maintain relevance without expanding the core line.
Threats	Competitors: Lebanese fast-casual and shawarma/falafel QSRs with aggressive value pricing; modern Mediterranean bowls with larger footprints can out-market and out-bundle.
Threats	Ingredient price volatility (za’atar herbs, sesame, dairy) typical to the region can pressure the target 32% COGS % unless suppliers and par levels are actively managed.
Threats	Operational throughput risk: if training and prep scheduling lag, queue times will rise quickly during lunch and evenings—QSR reputation can drop fast on delivery ratings.

ZA'ATAR W SEMSOM

Operations Overview

We'll run zaatar w semsom as a lean Modern Mediterranean QSR with rigorous prep discipline and software-backed inventory and labor control. The founder's vision (from our interviews, focusing on fast, ingredient-led consistency) is operationalized through standardized recipe cards, measured topping weights, and tightly defined assembly paths so every ticket is fast, predictable, and cost-controlled—especially important since alcohol is not part of the model.

- Recipe documentation & costing: build a master recipe spec for each SKU (base, protein, za'atar/sesame finish, sauces, garnishes) including gram weights, yields, batch sizes, and waste factors; use a costing workflow in MarketMan (or equivalent) to roll costs weekly from vendor invoices.
- Inventory control procedures: daily opening counts for high-variance SKUs (za'atar, sesame, labneh, halloumi/akkawi, pomegranate molasses, sumac pickles, dairy creams); par levels by shift, with batch production tied to forecasted orders.
- Food safety & quality checks: temperature logs for hot holding and cold storage, label/traceability by prep batch, and daily sensory checks for sesame toast level and za'atar moisture/salt consistency (these directly impact the brand).
- Labor management software: schedule shifts using 7Shifts (or equivalent) aligned to throughput surges (lunch and late dinner). Lock staffing bands for peak minutes-per-order rather than headcount alone.
- Training materials: short "line-of-fire" modules—(1) za'atar + semsom finish standardization, (2) assembly timing and calling out orders, (3) packaging for delivery to protect crunch/toppings integrity, (4) coffee & beverage add-ons workflow.
- Lean daily cadence: line huddle (10 minutes) for batch plan + order mix, mid-shift quality audit (finish coverage, portion weights), end-of-day inventory reconciliation and waste review by SKU.

POS & Profitability System

The POS & profitability system is designed to protect the brand's ingredient identity while controlling margin in a QSR environment. Each menu item is mapped to standardized components (bases, proteins, za'atar/sessem finish, sauces, garnishes) so the system can calculate COGS per item, monitor inventory variance, and guide real-time upsell (coffee-forward drinks, high-margin weekly specials, and dessert add-ons).

- POS strategy: set up modifier logic for size (Small/Medium/Large) and protein choices so labor and COGS remain consistent; enforce portion-level discounts/add-ons rather than free-form customization that creates variance.
- Recipe costing integration: connect recipe cards (from MarketMan or equivalent) to the POS item-level cost. Update costs weekly (or upon supplier change) and freeze pricing decisions for defined intervals.
- Inventory & waste analytics: track shrink/waste by batch (e.g., sesame toast batch, labneh portioning) and reconcile against theoretical usage; flag outliers for immediate line review.
- Labor scheduling feedback loop: compare sales velocity by hour (lunch vs late dinner) against scheduled labor; adjust staffing bands in 2-week cycles using POS demand curves.
- Profitability optimization tools: create dashboards for contribution margin per category (Bowls/Plates, Flatbread & Wraps, Sides/Salads, Desserts) and per delivery channel to protect the 20% delivery mix from margin bleed.

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Profit lever	How we measure it (system)	Action when it drifts
COGS control	Item-level cost vs theoretical usage; weekly variance report	Adjust portion weights, tighten batch yields, and update supplier terms if variance repeats
Throughput & labor	Orders/hour by category + labor hours by shift (7Shifts + POS)	Rebalance station assignments; revise pre-prep schedule for lunch/late peaks
Delivery profitability	Channel margin (POS channel tags) + refund/redo rates	Upgrade packaging workflow; reduce remakes by reinforcing finish integrity standards
Menu contribution	Margin by category + weekly special performance	Retain best performers; retire low-velocity SKUs without expanding prep complexity

Communications Strategy

Pre-opening communications will build immediate street recognition for zaatar w semsom: a bold, minimal identity that clearly communicates “za’atar + toasted sesame” within seconds. Because alcohol is not part of the offering, the content will focus on food texture, ingredient craftsmanship, coffee-forward add-ons, and delivery-ready packaging experience to convert both lunch passersby and late-day professionals.

- Brand development (2–3 weeks): final logo/typography rules, ingredient-led brand kit (color, type, photography style), menu engineering drafts with portion/size visuals (Small/Medium/Large).
- Website + ordering setup: build a fast mobile landing page with location hours (12:00–23:30), digital menu images, and delivery/takeaway ordering; ensure Google Business Profile is fully configured.
- Social media setup: IG/TikTok business profiles, story highlights (Menu, Weekly Special, Delivery), and consistent “finish” content templates showing za’atar + semsom assembly.
- Content calendar (first 6–8 weeks): weekly special teaser + behind-the-line prep (batching sauces/pickles, toasting sesame) plus customer-ready assembly videos optimized for lunch and late dinner timing.
- Photography/videography plan: shoot for (1) menu hero items, (2) macro sesame/za’atar texture shots, (3) delivery packaging integrity, and (4) coffee-forward beverage visuals; produce reusable short-form clips for ads and organic posts.

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Launch & Opening Strategy

Timeline (weeks before opening)	Soft-launch activities	Goal (what success looks like)
8-10	Finalize menu training: speed targets by station (za'atar + semsom dusting, flatbread build, bowl assembly); create standardized prep sheets; secure delivery platform menus/pricing	80%+ of test builds hit target time; delivery onboarding complete with correct weights/portion photos
6-7	Friends & family preview: invite Beirut young professionals groups; run 2 service rehearsals with real order mix (40% dine-in, 40% takeaway, 20% delivery target)	Collect feedback on flavor intensity, portion satisfaction, and pickup/delivery packaging speed; fix top 10 operational issues
4-5	Community partner day: offer "Za'atar x Coffee" vouchers to nearby coworkings/gyms; local micro-influencer seeding (small groups)	Generate the first 30-50 Google reviews and capture content of the cooking line and "ingredient cue" signage from street
2-3	Influencer night + Behind-the-counter tour: short, timed service flow; staff scripts; photo/video capture at peak windows (lunch + late dinner window)	Secure 10+ posts/reels with branded hashtag; achieve consistent throughput during a simulated rush
Opening week	Grand opening with limited-week perks: combo bundles (bowl/flatbread + coffee); loyalty QR at checkout; live "Weekly Special" spotlight launches	Hit stable service flow; ensure order accuracy; lock in packaging and delivery handoff checklist

- Soft-opening cadence: 3 preview nights (Wed–Fri) + 2 weekend community sessions to smooth staffing learning and reduce risk during peak periods.
- Friends & family events: cap invitations to keep lines moving; require guests to place pickup orders to test queueing and packaging speed.
- Community engagement: partner with 3-5 coworking spaces and neighborhood retailers in Gemmayzeh/Mar Mikhael/Hamra corridors—issue voucher cards redeemable at lunch and late dinner.
- Influencer nights: prioritize creators who can film the za'atar/sessem transformation (dusting + semsom finish) and the minimal QSR build process.
- Operational KPIs to track daily during soft launch: time-to-pack, order accuracy, remakes per 100 orders, and delivery pickup confirmation rate (must support 20% delivery mix).
- Week 1 retention: introduce a "come-back within 7 days" offer tied to the rotating Weekly Special to lock repeat visits.

Digital Marketing Strategy

For “zaatar w semsom” in Beirut, we will build demand where quick, ingredient-forward QSR choices are made: Google Search/Maps for immediate lunch and late dinner decisions, delivery-platform discovery for the 20% delivery mix, and email/SMS for repeat visits tied to weekly specials. Because alcohol is not offered (license not_allowed), we’ll focus on coffee-forward beverages and flavor-led bundles—so messaging remains consistent and profitable.

- Professional photography & assets: shoot the cooking line (za’atar + toasted sesame finish), portion visuals for Small/Medium/Large bowls, packaging for pickup/delivery, and “Weekly Special” staging so every post can be replicated weekly.
- Google Business Profile (Google My Business): optimize categories for Modern Mediterranean + Lebanese flatbread/bowls, set menu + service options (pickup/delivery), post weekly special updates, and pin photos with clear ingredient cues.
- Local SEO: use Beirut-neighborhood keywords (Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhael, Hamra, Achrafieh) in descriptions + photo alt text; create 6-10 location-specific posts tied to lunch vs late dinner timing (12:00–23:30).
- Review platform optimization: after pickup/delivery handoff, trigger a “leave a review” message; target 10+ reviews in opening week and respond within 24 hours with ingredient-focused replies.
- Delivery platform presence: ensure top placements via correct pricing, accurate photos, and fast preparation times; keep menu descriptions consistent with “za’atar + semsom” identity to reduce order confusion.
- Email marketing: weekly campaign synced to the Weekly Special; include a ‘build your bowl’ recommendation and a limited-time bundle (e.g., coffee + bowl). Capture emails at checkout via QR loyalty.

ZAATAR W SEMSOM

Social Media Strategy

Platform	Primary objective	Content types (what to post)	Cadence
Instagram	Brand identity + community building (bold/minimal)	Reels of assembly line (za'atar + semsom dusting), carousel menus with Small/Medium/Large visuals, stories with "vote your protein" polls	4-5 reels/week + daily stories during rush windows
TikTok	Speed + transparency (QSR promise)	Behind-the-scenes prep, time-lapse flatbread build, 'order-to-pack' micro-videos, customer POV on pickup	3-4 videos/week
Facebook	Repeat customer reach + neighborhood groups	Event posts for weekly special days, community partner announcements, simple menu updates	2-3 posts/week

- Influencer partnerships: recruit 8-12 micro-influencers around Gemmayzeh/Mar Mikhael/Hamra (food + office-lifestyle creators). Deliver a guided filming brief: show the za'atar-semsom finish and packaging speed.
- Branded hashtags: standardize one main hashtag (e.g., #zaatarwsemsom) plus 2-3 Beirut-local tags (e.g., #BeirutEats, #GemmayzehFood) and encourage posting from pickup/delivery.
- User-generated content (UGC) drive: launch a monthly "Best Bowl Build" with a simple QR at the counter; feature winners on Stories within 48 hours.
- Weekly special spotlight format: every week release a short reel that explains the seasonal ingredient in 15-20 seconds and connects it back to the za'atar + toasted sesame identity.
- Launch-to-ramp plan: week 1 prioritize proof (line, speed, ingredient intensity); weeks 2-6 shift to routine (bundles, repeat visits, customer builds).

Z A A T A R W S E M S O M

Ownership Profile

I reviewed the founder's stated background for this project and, at present, the founder's experience details are not provided. As part of the investment diligence, we will validate the founder's relevant capability in fast QSR operations, Lebanese/Modern Mediterranean flavor discipline, supply/COGS control for za'atar and sesame components, and the ability to train a lean staff model without sacrificing consistency across pickup and delivery.

- QSR execution discipline: ability to standardize assembly for bowls/flatbreads (Small/Medium/Large) and hit predictable prep times.
- Flavor-led product mastery: ensuring za'atar intensity + toasted sesame/somsom finish is consistent and distinctive in every batch.
- Operational rigor: packaging workflow and delivery handoff to protect presentation for the 20% delivery mix.
- Budget stewardship: fit-out and equipment selection aligned to a 35 sqm full-line kitchen and real-world Beirut build constraints.
- Go-to-market involvement: active participation in launch events, community partnerships, and weekly special storytelling.

Key Skills to Confirm (Founder Due Diligence)

We recommend presenting proof of experience in (1) QSR/fast-service operations, (2) Lebanese/Modern Mediterranean menu development, (3) inventory + prep standardization, and (4) delivery/pickup operational controls. If experience is outside food service, we will map how the leadership team fills the gaps (with an operations manager and a kitchen lead).

Thank You.

Business Plan — zaatar w semsom

Z A A T A R W S E M S O M