

Operations Management Simulation: Benihana

How to Play – Audio Transcript

Welcome to a brief overview of how to play the Operations Management Simulation, Benihana.

In this simulation, you will manage the operational details of your own Benihana restaurant. Your goal is to manage the bar and dining area to maximize utilization, throughput, and most importantly, profit.

Begin your orientation in the Prepare section. On the left, you'll see an overview of the steps to play. There is a downloadable 'how to play' manual that provides further detail. 'Operational Details' presents important details about the restaurant and also includes an interactive restaurant animation. Use this animation to familiarize yourself with how customers typically flow in and out of your restaurant.

When you're ready to start, go to Challenge 1. The first time you visit a challenge you'll see a pop-up description of the challenge. You can view this again at any time by clicking on "more information" at the top of the screen.

Each challenge contains a set of decisions for you to make. In the first challenge you can run the restaurant 'with batching', which means that customers will wait in the bar until they can be seated in parties of eight, or 'without batching', which means customers are seated in the dining area as they arrive. Once you've set your decision, click on "Simulate" to generate 20 runs—or nights—of data. The runs will populate in the box on the upper left. Highlight a run to see its related performance metrics in the tables below, including a financial summary, and how many customers you lost or served. To see a highlighted run animated in the restaurant, use the red animation controls. You can use the slider to speed up or slow down the animation, and you can also pause or fast forward to the end of the night.

Alternatively, the simulation can be run in 'Data Mode.' Click on the "view data" link in the upper left and the restaurant animation will be replaced with a table of all your scenarios. You can set your decisions and run the simulation directly from this screen. As with 'Animation Mode,' your runs will populate in the box on the left, and the related metrics will appear below. Each time you generate runs, whether in Animation Mode or Data Mode, they're noted as a new scenario in the table, and the related decisions for each scenario are listed on the right. Click on "view Animation" to return to Animation Mode at any time.

Challenges 1 through 5 all function with a different set of decisions, including changes to bar size, utilizing different types of batching, and changing the dining time. If you don't see one of the challenges in your menu bar, your instructor has disabled that challenge for you.

The final challenge, Challenge 6, combines all the options from the previous challenges and provides an opportunity to "Design your Best Strategy" for Benihana. Once you've set all of your decisions in this challenge, click on "Simulate" to see how profitable your strategy is. Note that your instructor may choose to limit the number of Scenarios you can create in Challenge 6. If so, that limit will be noted at the top of the page.

This concludes our video on how to play. Good luck running your Benihana restaurant!