Sondalia
EXPRESS MARKET STUDIES

Independent cafés in Manchester's Northern Quarter: a 5-venue competitor snapshot

Free sample of a Sondalia Competitor Snapshot · Desk research only · Data checked on 20 November 2026 · Prices in GBP

> **Decision question for this example:** "I'm thinking of opening an independent brunch-and-coffee café in or near the Northern Quarter. Who am I up against, how do they present themselves and what do they charge?"
> **Scope:** 5 independent venues, public information only. No visits, no footfall or sales data, no review analysis. Sondalia is a new service and this is a demonstration, not a client report.

How to read the labels

CONFIRMED from an official source (the venue's own website or menu, or the Food Standards Agency register) and checked on 20 Nov 2026. UNVERIFIED reported only by a third party (directory, blog, aggregator); may be out of date. NOT FOUND no reliable public data found.

1. The five venues at a glance

Venue	Address and hygiene rating (FSA)	How it presents itself	Published prices
Ezra & Gil (Hilton St)	20 Hilton Street, M1 1FR. FHRS **5**, rated 17 Mar 2024 CONFIRMED	"Coffee, provisions & brunch". Says it was established in 2014 and now has two Manchester sites (Hilton Street, Peter Street) plus Liverpool. Sells coffee beans, merchandise, gift cards, offers private hire and an ordering app. CONFIRMED (own website). Roaster: NOT FOUND	Official menu image dated Oct 2026: toast and butter £4.00, beans on sourdough £8.00, smashed avocado on seeded sourdough £12.50, classic "E&G" breakfast £14.50, pancakes £11.00–£14.00 CONFIRMED. Coffee prices not on the menu image: NOT FOUND
Idle Hands	35 Dale Street, M1 2HF. FHRS **5**, rated 5 May 2025 CONFIRMED	Own site: no house roaster, rotating guest speciality roasters and a rotating filter "brew bar"; daily sweet pies and cakes; food served Mon–Fri 8:30–15:00 and Sat–Sun 10:00–15:30 CONFIRMED	Macchiato £2.70 on its own online order page CONFIRMED (online price; may differ in store). A third-party menu transcription lists flat white £3.60, cowboy beans £9.50, vegan breakfast £15.00 UNVERIFIED
Siop Shop	53 Tib Street, M4 1LS. FHRS **5**, rated 20 Feb 2025 CONFIRMED	Official site (siopshop.co) is a merchandise and voucher shop; no menu. Third parties describe house-roasted coffee under the "Siop Tec" name and sourdough doughnuts UNVERIFIED	Official coffee prices NOT FOUND. Doughnuts £3.99 per one aggregator UNVERIFIED. Opening hours differ between sources NOT FOUND
Just Between Friends (NQ)	56 Tib Street, M4 1LG. FHRS **5**, rated 12 Feb 2026 CONFIRMED	Coffee-led café; a second site is listed at Beehive Mill, Jersey St by an aggregator UNVERIFIED. Its website returned an error (HTTP 500) when checked on 20 Nov 2026.	Flat white £4.00 per one aggregator UNVERIFIED
Fig + Sparrow	20 Oldham Street, FSA lists postcode M1 1JN. FHRS **4**, rated 18 Apr 2025 CONFIRMED	A Manchester guide describes it as part café, part design and gift shop UNVERIFIED. We could not confirm which website is the venue's own.	A website branded "Fig Sparrow" lists brunch dishes at £6–£12, but we could not confirm it belongs to the venue UNVERIFIED

FHRS = Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, 0 (urgent improvement) to 5 (very good). A rating is a snapshot of the last inspection, not a quality score for the food.

2. What the data does and doesn't say

- **Hygiene is not a differentiator.** Four of the five venues hold a 5 and one holds a 4, so a new entrant simply needs to match that standard. CONFIRMED
- **Brunch mains sit roughly between £8 and £15.** Ezra & Gil's own menu spans £8.00 (beans on sourdough) to £14.50 (classic breakfast). The unverified third-party figures for Idle Hands (£9.50–£15.00) and Fig + Sparrow (£10–£12) fall in the same band. Treat the band as a first estimate until you see the current menus in person.
- **Flat white price: only two unverified data points** (£3.60 and £4.00). Not enough to call a market price; a full study would collect more from menus or visits.
- **Roaster identity is the most visible split.** Idle Hands rotates guest roasters, Siop Shop is reported to roast its own coffee, and the other three have no confirmed roaster information. This is where a newcomer could take a clear position.
- **Official information is patchy.** Of the five, only Ezra & Gil and Idle Hands publish any current menu or price on their own sites. Several competitors are easier to compare through third parties, which are less reliable.

3. Warning: "best of" lists go stale

Two venues that appear in popular Northern Quarter lists were **left out** because sources conflict about whether they are trading:

- **TAKK, 6 Tariff Street:** a Northern Quarter blog list presents it as open, while HappyCow reports it closed in October 2024 and Wanderlog marks it permanently closed. Another directory still shows opening hours. NOT FOUND (status unconfirmed)
- **North Tea Power, 36 Tib Street:** a 2023 local news report announced its closure on 18 June 2023, a directory says "confirmed closed September 2026", yet a website of that name still lists opening hours. NOT FOUND (status unconfirmed)

A paid study would settle questions like these before you build a plan around a competitor that has gone, or miss one that is thriving.

4. Three gaps to test, not conclusions

1. **Transparent pricing.** Several competitors publish little or nothing on their own sites. A café with a complete, current online menu could be easier to choose.
2. **A clear coffee story.** Only Idle Hands states its sourcing approach on its own site. Hypothesis: a specific, verifiable sourcing story differentiates.
3. **Hours and format.** Idle Hands' kitchen closes at 15:00 or 15:30. Hypothesis: afternoon or evening demand is under-served. We have **no demand data** yet, so this must be tested.

5. A three-step validation plan

1. Visit all five at two times of day (weekday morning, weekend late morning) and record queue length, seating and the real coffee menu with prices.
2. Ask 10 people who currently buy coffee in the area what they would change about their usual café (short script provided in a full study).
3. Check licensing, planning and food-business registration requirements with Manchester City Council before committing to a lease. This sample does not cover them.

Limits. Desk research on one day. No footfall, rent, sales or review-sentiment data. Prices change often. This is information to help you decide, not advice, and it does not predict whether a business will succeed.

Sources (all accessed 20 November 2026)

1. Food Standards Agency, Food Hygiene Rating Scheme open data API: api.ratings.food.gov.uk/Establishments (FHRS IDs: Ezra & Gil 1820167, Idle Hands 1819793, Siop Shop 1819777, Just between Friends 1831129, Fig and Sparrow 1816885). CONFIRMED
2. Ezra & Gil, official website and Oct 2026 menu images: ezraandgil.com/menus
3. Idle Hands, official menu page: idlehandscoffee.com/menu; online order page: idle-hands-coffee-ltd.square.site/product/macchiato/186
4. Siop Shop, official website: siopshop.co
5. Third-party, UNVERIFIED: Spinach, Idle Hands menu transcription (spinach.guide); Businessesmap, Siop Shop and Just Between Friends menus (businessesmap.com); Manchester's Finest, Siop Shop (manchestersfinest.com); I Love Manchester, best independent coffee shops (ilovemanchester.com); The Technik, Northern Quarter indie coffee shops (thetechnik.co.uk); fig-sparrow.site/menu (ownership unconfirmed).
6. Closure conflicts: HappyCow, TAKK (happycow.net); Wanderlog, TAKK (wanderlog.com); Yelp, TAKK (yelp.co.uk); Manchester World, North Tea Power (manchesterworld.uk); BrewAtlas, North Tea Power (brewatlas.co); North Tea Power website (northteapower.co.uk).

Want this for your own idea? Sondalia Competitor Snapshot: 5 competitors, 48 h, $37. Express Market Study: 72 h, $75. Brief us at timflow43@gmail.com. Every data point comes with its source and a label like the ones above.

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