ARTICLE 20 · HOSPITALITY

# Where There's a Will, There's a Double-Double

*In-N-Out made convenience part of its business from the start. It has also spent years deciding which kinds of convenience it is willing to offer.*

**BY DAVID AMBROSE · OCTOBER 19, 2026**

---

KTLA recently reported that independent drivers are offering to deliver In-N-Out orders through online marketplaces. Some listings charge up to $50 above the cost of the food. In one reporter's test, a Zelle deposit was followed by neither burgers nor a reply.

It is a delivery arrangement with a service fee, a payment app, and an element of suspense.

This is not a new question for In-N-Out. The company's own history traces its early service model to a two-way speaker box that let customers order and receive meals without leaving their cars. Convenience was there from the beginning. The company's version kept the order and handoff within its own operation.

A later version proved less welcome. In 2015, In-N-Out sued DoorDash over deliveries it said it had not authorized, raising concerns about food handling and use of its trademarks. But litigation was not the only approach available to restaurants. At the time, another burger chain, Umami Burger, described partnering with delivery services and using hot bags to help maintain food quality. The contrast was not simply delivery versus no delivery. It was two different ways of trying to manage the risks.

Those examples put today's Facebook Marketplace listings in a different light. The choice is not simply between preserving a beloved experience and giving customers what they want. It is also about who gets to handle the food, represent the brand, and shape the customer's expectations.

In-N-Out's position is understandable. A drive-thru lets the restaurant manage the order, prepare the food, and hand it to the customer. Delivery adds another link. An informal driver found online adds more uncertainty still. If the burger arrives cold, late, or not at all, the customer may not know which part of the journey failed.

From an operator’s perspective, that boundary makes sense. Restaurant work is organized around steps: order, preparation, handoff. Customers experience the meal as one thing. They may not care to sort out who controlled each step when something goes wrong.

That does not make In-N-Out responsible for an independent driver’s fee or a missing order. The report cannot tell us whether this unofficial market harms the brand, reinforces the appeal of its food, or barely registers with most customers. It documents a workaround, not its effect.

It is tempting to see the fees as proof of In-N-Out’s mystique. People appear willing to go to unusual lengths for a burger they cannot order through a delivery app. But a listing is not proof that customers regularly pay the fee, and willingness to pay may reflect convenience as much as devotion. The story gives us a glimpse of demand, not a measure of fandom.

In-N-Out may reasonably decide that the risk of losing control outweighs the benefit of reaching customers at home. But refusing delivery does not end the delivery business. It leaves other people to provide it, with their own fees, standards, and relationships to the brand.

In-N-Out’s handoff is part of its service. On Marketplace, the handoff is also the customer’s biggest leap of faith.