

2026 EDITION

The Bitcoin launch checklist: Ordinals, Runes & beyond.

What I learned inscribing 1,500 Pizza Ninjas on Bitcoin mainnet, launching Pizza Pets (1M+ on-chain interactions), and shipping through every protocol cycle. Pre-launch, launch-day, post-launch — with the mistakes that cost us real BTC.

THE SIX WEEKS BEFORE

Most launches fail here, not on mint day.

By the time the mint button is live, 80% of the outcome is already determined by what you did in the six weeks before. Treat pre-launch like launch.

- Inscription rehearsal on signet/testnet.** Every orchestration script. Every fee scenario. Every recursive parent-child dependency. If you haven't inscribed 50 testnet items end-to-end, you haven't rehearsed.

- Fee estimation strategy.** Not one number — a fee curve. What you pay at 20 sat/vB vs 200. CPFP plan when parents stall. Alert thresholds for the team.

- Whitelist + allowlist logic.** Who mints first, at what price, for how long. Written down and simulated. The loudest community voices will test it live.

- Marketplace listings prepared.** Magic Eden, OKX, whichever you care about. Metadata, images, collection page drafts ready before mint.

- Communications plan.** Who announces what and when. Who handles the inevitable Twitter/X questions at 3 AM UTC.

- Kill-switch rehearsal.** What do you do if the inscription pipeline stalls? Who decides? In whose wallet are the recovery funds?

THE FIRST 24 HOURS

Ruthless triage. Everything else can wait.

Before mint opens

Final fee re-check. All scripts armed. Team in a single call or channel — no private DMs. Marketplace pages pre-drafted. Metadata repo locked.

Common launch-day failures

CPFP timing on stalled parents. Fee spikes that break orchestration assumptions. Marketplace indexers lagging 30–60 minutes behind chain. Wallet software displaying empty inscriptions until refresh.

During mint

One person watches mempool + inscription confirmation. One person answers community. One person on-call for pipeline errors. Nobody tries to do all three.

What NOT to do on launch day

Change the collection metadata. Reply to price complaints. Promise new features. Ship anything to the contract logic. Hire. Fire. Tweet hot takes.

HARD-EARNED RULE

On Bitcoin there is no `setBaseURI`. What goes on-chain is permanent. Re-inscribe a correction costs you — and looks amateur. Measure twice, inscribe once.

WHAT TO BUILD, WHAT TO BUY

Bitcoin tooling is maturing. Know what's safe.

Inscription

OrdinalsBot or ord-native flows. For serious collections, roll your own orchestration — don't let a third-party service hold the private keys of the collection's genesis wallet. Recursive inscriptions change the economics.

Wallets

Xverse, Leather, and UniSat cover the realistic user base. Test inscribe-and-receive on all three before launch. Edge cases differ.

Indexing

Ord for basic. Hiro or Best-in-Slot for APIs at scale. Expect 10–60 min lag on busy days. Never assume the indexer is in sync with chain truth.

Runes, BRC-20, stamps

Runes for fungible economics post-halving. BRC-20 legacy but still live. Stamps if you need truly permanent data, but accept the footprint. Pick one — don't try to launch on three standards.

SECURITY NON-NEGOTIABLES

- Genesis wallet in cold storage.** Hardware wallet, multi-sig if the collection is serious.
- Separate hot wallet** for operational expenses (fees, testing). Fund minimally, top up as needed.
- Signed-message verification** for any "proof of ownership" flows. Don't trust client claims.
- Metadata repo under version control** with a reproducible build. If someone asks "how did you generate trait #872?" you need an answer.

THE NINETY DAYS AFTER

Every serious project earns its second chapter.

Sellout is a milestone, not a conclusion. What separates the collections that survive from the ones that flip-and-forget is what happens in the 30–90 days after mint.

What to build next

- A reason to hold.** Utility, unlocks, dynamic traits tied to block height, future mint rights. Something that gets better with time on-chain.

- A story told consistently.** Weekly or bi-weekly updates. Not marketing fluff — actual progress. Community trust compounds on predictability.

- Secondary-market health.** Floor, volume, listing depth across Magic Eden/OKX. If floor dies in week three, you have a retention problem, not a marketing problem.

- Multi-chain thinking.** Airdrop mechanics to Ethereum, Solana, or Runes holders. Expand reach without diluting the core.

- On-chain game state.** If the project has game mechanics (Pizza Pets feeding, for example), settling state on-chain is what makes the project genuinely Bitcoin-native vs. a JPEG with a story.

Five questions to answer in writing — before launch.

If you can't answer these cleanly, you're not ready. Not "almost ready." Not ready.

- Why Bitcoin, specifically?** If the answer is "because Bitcoin is hot," build on Ethereum or Solana. If it's "because permanence and censorship-resistance matter for this use case," proceed.
- What happens if the mint underperforms?** Is there a path where this still matters at 50% sellout? 20%?
- Who is the senior dev at the on-chain coalface?** Named. Paid. Available for the 24 hours of launch. Not a Fiverr contractor.
- What's the 90-day post-launch plan?** Not marketing — the actual product work after the hype curve flattens.
- What's permanent and what's not?** Which metadata lives on-chain, which off-chain. The split determines what survives if your infrastructure disappears.

SHIPPING ON BITCOIN? NEED SENIOR DEV OR AN ADVISOR?

I was on the dev team behind Pizza Ninjas (blue-chip Ordinals, Sotheby's \$139,700) and Pizza Pets (first BTC-native pets, 1M+ interactions). I still take selective Bitcoin work when the system has to survive mainnet.

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