

ROADMAP TO WooCommerce Custom Theme & Store Setup

Environment Setup

- Installed Laragon (local dev server).
- Created local domain: artcommerce.test.
- Enabled SSL in Laragon (Menu → Apache → SSL → Enable SSL).
- Opened <https://artcommerce.test> to test HTTPS.

WordPress Installation

- Installed fresh WordPress inside Laragon (www/ArtCommerce).
- Configured wp-config.php with DB details.
- Logged into <http://artcommerce.test/wp-admin>.

Theme Creation (Custom Woo Theme)

- Created theme folder: `/wp-content/themes/commerceTheme/`.
- Added style.css with theme metadata.
- Added functions.php → enqueued CSS/JS, added WooCommerce support.
- Created index.php, header.php, footer.php.
- Created assets/ (css, js, images), inc/ (setup.php, woocommerce-hooks.php), woocommerce/ (template overrides).

WooCommerce Setup

- Installed & activated WooCommerce plugin.
- Setup Wizard → Created essential pages (Shop, Cart, Checkout, My Account).
- Assigned correct pages in WooCommerce → Settings → Advanced.
- Verified URLs: `/shop`, `/cart`, `/checkout`, `/my-account`.

Template Customization

- Overrode WooCommerce templates inside `commerceTheme/woocommerce/`.
- Edited archive-product.php for Shop page layout.
- Edited single-product.php for product details design.
- Planned overrides for `cart/`, `checkout/`, `myaccount/`.

Styling & Assets

- Linked custom.css and custom.js via functions.php.
- Built custom header/footer.
- Customized shop/product card styles.

Payments Setup

- Enabled SSL in Laragon.
- Forced HTTPS in WordPress URLs (Settings → General).
- Configured `FORCE_SSL_ADMIN` in wp-config.php.
- Installed Stripe plugin (test mode enabled).
- Installed PayPal plugin (sandbox mode enabled).
- Placed sandbox test orders.
- Planned switch to live keys after sandbox success

WooCommerce Store Optimization Checklist

1. Payments

- Install and activate Stripe (credit/debit, Apple/Google Pay)
- Install and activate PayPal
- (Optional for PH) Install GCash / PayMaya / PayMongo / Xendit gateway
- Configure sandbox/test keys first
- Place test orders in sandbox
- Switch to live keys after testing
- Confirm checkout is served over HTTPS
- Perform 1 live micro-transaction (₱5–₱10) to verify real payments

2. Shipping & Taxes

- Add shipping zones (Metro Manila, Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao, International)
- Configure shipping methods (Flat Rate, Free Shipping, Local Pickup)
- (Optional) Install courier plugins (Lalamove, J&T, GrabExpress, etc.)
- Enable tax calculations in WooCommerce settings
- Add PH VAT (12%) if required
- Confirm tax display (prices incl. or excl. VAT)
- Place test order with shipping + tax applied

3. Performance Optimization

- Install caching plugin (WP Rocket, LiteSpeed Cache, W3 Total Cache)
- Enable object caching (Redis/Memcached if supported)
- Install image optimization plugin (ShortPixel, Smush, Imagify)
- Convert images to WebP format
- Enable lazy loading for images
- Use a CDN (Cloudflare free plan or BunnyCDN)
- Test site speed on GTmetrix / PageSpeed Insights

4. Security

- Install a security plugin (Wordfence or iThemes Security)
- Enable SSL (Let's Encrypt / self-signed for local dev)
- Force HTTPS for all pages
- Add reCAPTCHA to login, register, and checkout forms
- Enable 2FA for admin users
- Regularly update WordPress, plugins, and themes
- Install backup plugin (UpdraftPlus / BlogVault)
- Test restoring a backup

5. SEO & Marketing

- Install an SEO plugin (Yeast SEO or Rank Math)
- Add unique meta titles and descriptions to product/category pages
- Add alt text for all product images
- Ensure WooCommerce schema markup is active

- Submit sitemap to Google Search Console
- Connect to Google Analytics / GA4
- (Optional) Add Facebook Pixel / TikTok Pixel for ads
- Install email marketing plugin (Mailchimp, FluentCRM, Klaviyo)
- Setup abandoned cart recovery

6. User Experience (UX)

- Install a mini cart / AJAX add-to-cart plugin
- Enable product filters (by category, price, attributes)
- Add a wishlist plugin (TI Wishlist or YITH Wishlist)
- Customize shop/product archive layout (grid, columns)
- Ensure site is mobile responsive
- Test checkout on mobile devices
- Add breadcrumb navigation for better UX
- Optimize product search (Ajax Search for WooCommerce)

7. Store Management

- Enable stock management (auto reduce on order)
- Setup low stock / out of stock notifications
- Customize WooCommerce emails with branding
- Setup order status flow (Pending → Processing → Completed)
- Add a currency switcher if selling internationally
- Configure refund and return policies
- Schedule regular backups (daily or weekly)

8. Scalability & Hosting

- Create a staging site for testing updates safely
- Use WooCommerce-optimized hosting
- Monitor performance with Query Monitor plugin
- Use New Relic or hosting tools for advanced monitoring
- Plan for scaling resources if expecting high traffic