



CHEF

JOB DESCRIPTION

A love of food and cooking is vital to succeed as a chef. The role involves planning and coordinating food production at a restaurant or other eatery, managing a kitchen, and instructing waitstaff. Chefs may cook food themselves or oversee its preparation by their staff. Many chefs are known to create unique menus and signature dishes. They also handle buying and budgeting for catering operations and restaurants.



SALARY

Commis chef ★★★★★

Head chef ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Most restaurants run independently to tight budgets • Worldwide job opportunities • Industry constantly adapting to changing culinary tastes

CAREER PATHS

Most chefs train on the job, joining a kitchen as a trainee, or *commis chef*, and studying for vocational qualifications. Ability and commitment are your keys to promotion. Working under a rated chef can give your career an extra boost.

TRAINEE Following school, trainees learn their craft by rotating through sections such as vegetables, fish, and butchery to become familiar with them all. The type and length of apprenticeship depends on the employer.

GRADUATE Private academies, some run by notable cooks, provide training for aspiring chefs. However, fees can be high, and there is no guarantee of employment later.



HEAD CHEF Devises a restaurant menu and runs its kitchen. The role also involves making key business decisions with the aim of making the establishment a success.



CHEF With experience and sufficient talent, you will climb the ladder of responsibility in the kitchen, through prep cook and line cook, to *sous chef* (the second-in-command, who may schedule staff and buy ingredients), to the position of head chef, or *chef de cuisine*.

SKILLS GUIDE



Excellent team-working skills to manage staff in a high-pressure kitchen environment.



Creativity and imagination to devise unique and delicious dishes and keep the menu fresh.



Strong interpersonal skills to maintain good relationships with staff at all levels, as well as diners.



The ability to calculate quantities, price differences, and catering costs to run a profitable kitchen.



Well-honed practical skills and the ability to use kitchen equipment with ease and speed.



CONTRACT CATERING MANAGER Provides catering services to clients for business functions and special events.



INSTITUTIONAL COOK Cooks in the kitchen of a large organization. Employers include the armed services, health providers, factories, and other workplaces.



In the US, more than 13 million people are employed in the restaurant industry.



RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **BAKER** Produces bread and confectionery products within a manufacturing operation, retail outlet, or restaurant.
- ▶ **BAR OWNER/PROPRIETOR** Runs premises, such as a pub or bar, that serve a variety of beverages. They may also consider branching out into catering or food operations.
- ▶ **FOOD-PROCESSING OPERATIVE** Works on factory production lines, overseeing the mixing, cooking, and packing of food products.
- ▶ **KITCHEN ASSISTANT** Performs basic tasks from food preparation and checking deliveries to cleaning the kitchen and all the equipment.

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Food • Cooking • Business administration • Catering, hospitality, and tourism • Food production and farming



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS A degree is not required to become a chef, but food and food production qualifications are an advantage in this industry.



LIFESTYLE Work often starts very early and finishes very late. Split shifts, evenings, and weekends are a normal part of the working cycle.



LOCATION Chefs work mostly in restaurant or hotel kitchens. Catering jobs may involve traveling to locations with cooking equipment.



THE REALITIES Kitchens can be busy high-pressure environments, while equipment, such as knives and hot pans, is potentially dangerous.