



Chef Career Feature

Getting a Star Chef Job

The Outlook

The Culinary profession is a booming area and one that currently offers many job opportunities. It is predicted that job opportunities for chefs, as well as other food preparation workers, will be plentiful. This is attributed to the continuing growing number of restaurants and an historical pattern that as people leave this field, they are replaced. For high-level chef positions with higher pay be prepared to go up against tough competition.

Where are the jobs?

Jobs are everywhere. Obviously, big cities have the most opportunity. Furthermore, restaurants are cropping up like crazy in areas like Florida. There is a simple explanation for this: Florida is a place flooded with retirees and vacationers.

Training

The most common training for a chef is two years in catering college. Part-time jobs and summer work placements are the practical experience and are easily attainable. Sometimes, a student works in a kitchen full-time as an apprentice and attends catering college off hours. This is a 'day-release' method lasting one to three years. European training is more rigorous, being a four-year training period. Students usually graduate to become demi-chef de partie or chef de partie. Commis chefs (apprentices) usually work in starter or entrée sections of the kitchen.

What is a Chef?

The word chef is actually a shortened form of the French phrase, chef de cuisine meaning "head of the kitchen." A person who cooks professionally may be called a chef. There are various titles given to people who work in a professional kitchen. Each can be thought of as a type of chef or a job title.

What are the different job possibilities?

There is a system of hierarchy found in restaurants, particularly upscale restaurants and hotels, called Brigade de cuisine, rooted in France. In America, the people working in the kitchen are simply called the kitchen staff. This is especially true in more casual restaurants. This system is a way of giving assigned tasks and responsibilities to different people working in the professional kitchen.

Executive chefs

The "executive chef" is the person in charge of the kitchen. He supervises all kitchens of a restaurant group, hotel, or corporate dining operation. This is the main chef, or "corporate chef." Executive chefs determine serving sizes, plan menus, order food supplies, and oversee all food service operations and kitchen operations to ensure uniform quality and presentation of meals.

Chef de Cuisine

Chef de Cuisine is the traditional French term that means "Head of the Kitchen" or number one. In a lone restaurant, he has the same responsibilities of an executive chef and is referred to as such. In a larger restaurant group or hotel chain, the chef de cuisine reports to an executive chef and is responsible for the daily operations of a single kitchen.

Sous-chef

Sous-chef de cuisine is the French term meaning under-chef of the kitchen. Therefore, a sous chef is number two in the kitchen. He is the assistant to the executive chef. Large restaurants have several sous chefs, while small restaurants may have none. Their tasks include: scheduling, filling in for the executive chef, and assisting the line cooks.

Chef de Partie

The French term, chef de partie means "station chef" or "line cook." He is in charge of one area. For the most part, the station chef is the only one working that section. In a large upscale restaurant however, each station chef might have several assistants under him/her and within the department. Line cooks often have their own hierarchy (First Cook, Second Cook, etc).

Station chef titles, according to the brigade system -

- Sauté Chef- generally the highest position of all the stations.



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The cook is responsible for all sauces and all items that are sautéed. French - saucier

- Fish Chef –prepares fish dishes and usually does all fish butchering and fish sauces. French - Poissonier
- Roast Chef –prepares all the meat dishes, as well as their sauces. In French - Rotisseur.
- Grill Chef- This is the person who does all the grilling. The responsibilities of this person may include those of the roast chef as well. French - Grillardi.
- Fry Chef- prepares all fried items. This job may go along with the roast chef also. French - Friturier
- Vegetable Chef- prepares hot vegetables, appetizers, pastas, starches, and soups. In a full formal brigade system of a very large scales restaurant, this position is broken down further. The legumier would prepare all the vegetables and the potager would prepare the soups.

- Roundsman- can be called a swing cook. She is the jack of all trades and fills in as needed on any station. French - Tournan

- Pantry Chef- responsible for preparing cold foods. French- garde manager

- Butcher - responsible for selecting and breading all meats, poultry, and fish. French - Bouche

- Pastry Chef - prepares the baked goods, pastries and desserts. In large restaurants, the pastry chef may often have an entire separate team and a separate kitchen. French- Pâtissier.

So, if you are interested in a career in culinary art, start looking. The outlook is good. There is a job waiting for you. You certainly will not start out as an executive chef or a head chef, but there are many stepping stones along the way that will be fun and provide you with the experience you need to move up the ladder.

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