



Careers information sheet

Chef/professional cookery

What do Chefs do?

Chefs or Professional cooks work in hotel and restaurant kitchens, or with outside caterers. There is a high demand for qualified experienced chefs as the number of restaurants and food outlets continues to grow.

There is a well established career route involving training to develop the practical skills of food preparation. Chefs often start as commis chefs (juniors or apprentices) where they learn about the different sections of the kitchen, how to make sauces and desserts, and how to cook meat and fish. Chefs de partie run a specific section of the kitchen, such as sauces or pastries and Head chefs are in charge of the whole kitchen, the quality of the food and a team of chefs. They plan the menus, order ingredients, manage the finances, and keep the kitchen running efficiently - especially overseeing food hygiene and health and safety.

The job is creative as it involves devising menus, presentation of food and the best use of ingredients. Job titles can be a misleading as the role of Head Chef in a small food outlet is very different from, say, a large London restaurant. It is possible to progress into Restaurant Management.
(Source: jobs4u)

There are several different pathways to become a qualified Chef.

- ROUTE 1 - Work based learning - Apprenticeship
- ROUTE 2 - College based vocational learning
- ROUTE 3 - Via a management degree

Go to the Key Routes web pages for interactive versions of these –
<http://www.keyroutes.org.uk/areas/hospitality/opt-chef.aspx>

Adults without formal qualifications can move into the catering industry. You will need to demonstrate your enthusiasm and aptitude and will need to take the same training as younger people although it might not take as long.

The catering industry welcomes people with practical experience, good people skills and business sense.

What else should I be doing?

It would help your career to:

- get a Saturday job in a restaurant, pub or fast food outlet
- study for a Food Hygiene or Food Safety certificate

- develop your communication skills
- keep up your personal presentation
- keep up with trends in food and food production
- practise your hand eye co-ordination and dexterity
- take an evening class in cooking or a Junior Chef course
- cook for your friends and family to develop your practical skills
- watch cooking programmes on TV and read food magazines
- learn about food and where it comes from - visit your local farmers' market and talk to stallholders
- keep fit - being on your feet all day needs stamina!

Useful links

The following organisations accredit qualifications in nutrition and food safety.

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
<http://www.cieh.org>

Royal Institute of Public Health
<http://www.riph.org.uk>

ASET
<http://www.aset.ac.uk>

Royal Society for the Promotion of Health
<http://www.rsph.org>

Vocational qualifications related to food preparation and cookery are offered by:

The Hospitality Awarding Body
<http://www.hab.org.uk>

City & Guilds
<http://www.city-and-guilds.org.uk>

Goal
<http://www.goalonline.co.uk>

Caterer will give you an idea of the range of jobs available in catering.
<http://www.caterer.com>