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The CulinarySchools.com Newsletter

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Food Trivia of the Month

Milk as meat? In 1996, the United States Department of Agriculture allowed the milk product yogurt to be used as a substitute for meat in school lunches.

A Bit of Food History: Cheesecake

That delightful treat, the cheesecake, can be found today at nearly every restaurant. Today there are a thousand different recipes for cheesecake, and the only consistent ingredient you'll find in any of them (other than sugar!) is cheese. Typically, cream cheese, Neufchatel, cottage cheese, and ricotta are used.

The earliest history of the art is lost, but we know that cheesecake was already a popular dish in ancient Greece. With the Roman conquest of Greece, naturally the Romans began making cheesecake as well. The Roman name for this type of cake (derived from the Greek term,) became "placenta." Placenta was more like a cheesecake, baked on a pastry base, or sometimes inside a pastry casing. They were also called "libum" by the Romans, and were often used as an offering at their temples to their gods. Meaning that cheesecake was so good, it can be given to the gods!

The first written recipe for cheesecake comes from Marcus Porcius Cato, a Roman politician. He wrote about farming, wine making, and cooking among other things. This is his recipe for libum, the small sweet cake often given as a temple offering: "*Libum to be made as follows: 2 pounds cheese well crushed in a mortar; when it is well crushed, add in 1 pound bread-wheat flour or, if you want it to be lighter, just 1/2 a pound, to be mixed with the cheese. Add one egg and mix all together well. Make a loaf of this, with the leaves under it, and cook slowly in a hot fire under a brick.*" Not long after this, the first Olympic Athletes were offered small cheesecakes at the games. Later, Athenaeus, a

Proverb:

One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.
--Virginia Woolf

Culinary Careers

So, you dream of being a chef...You've seen them on television cooking up delectable goodies and wowing audiences, and you long to live a life in the kitchen. But what kind of chef do you want to be?

What kind of education do you need to have the culinary career of your dreams? Here you'll find information on the various cooking positions available and what you will need to do to be eligible.

Executive Chef

The executive chef is the highest position in the kitchen - or, if you will, the cream of the crop. The Executive Chef (or Head Chef) manages and directs the other cooks and is often found in the fine dining business or at upscale restaurants. In order to become an Executive Chef, a student has to attend a culinary school or a vocational center, and then works their way up. Obviously, having a culinary degree makes it much easier to rise through the ranks to the executive chef position. The path to Executive Chef usually begins with an internship in a kitchen as an apprentice to the Executive Chef. An apprenticeship in the culinary world usually lasts three years, including both the classroom and real working experience.

Sous Chef

Featured Partner



Greek writer, wrote a down a sweeter version of cheesecake in about A.D. 230: "*Take cheese and pound it till smooth and pasty; put cheese in a brazen sieve; add honey and spring wheat flour. Heat in one mass, cool, and serve.*"

By 1000 A.D., cheesecake had been introduced to Europe by conquering Roman armies. In 1929, Arnold Reuben, owner of the Turf Restaurant in New York City, discovered how delicious a cheesecake could be when using cream cheese instead of cottage cheese. He began serving it in his restaurant, launching the still-popular New York-style cheesecake.

Today, this yummy dessert continues to be wildly popular - among both gods and men!

Life After Being an Executive Chef

Executive Chefs may compete for certification as a Master Chef. This may lead to further advancement in the industry and higher paying positions, though it is not required. Another popular option among chefs is to start their own business in the form of a new restaurant, catering service, or as a personal chef. Some even go on to be instructors in culinary training schools.

Advancement opportunities for culinary students and workers depend on their training, ability to cook quickly and well, work experience, and ability to work in groups. In general, students of culinary schools start higher paying and higher status jobs without spending much time in lower-level kitchen jobs. Culinary school graduates can also achieve higher positions with more ease and have unlimited potential in the culinary world.

A Word From Our Staff

Becoming a chef requires ambition, drive, creativity, patience and stamina. Not everyone is cut out for the hard work that goes on in a professional kitchen. But we have faith that you have what it takes!

We know making the decision to work in the field of the culinary arts is not one you've taken lightly. We are here to help, and we hope that you find our newsletter and the information it contains entertaining and insightful. We continue to have big plans this year for our website, including our Food Trivia poll you saw above, chef profiles, food related proverbs and more. We still plan to add one more piece of exciting content to our website monthly, and your input continues to be invaluable.

The Sous Chef is the Executive Chef's Assistant. He or she is second in charge, fills in when the Executive Chef is off duty. The Sous Chef is responsible for making sure the other kitchen chefs fulfill the Executive Chef's orders, called the line chefs. In small restaurants there may not be a need for a Sous Chef, whereas in larger operations there may be multiple Sous Chefs. A Sous Chef is usually on his or her way to becoming a Head Chef, and thus, requires the same education as an Executive Chef--a culinary degree, internships, and apprenticeships.

Line Chef

The Line Chefs (or station cooks) work under the watchful eyes of the Sous Chef. Each Line Chef is in charge of a specific part of the meal (listed below). In very large operations the Line Chef may have assistants and lower chefs under his or her supervision. In most kitchens, however, the Line Chef is the only cook working on that part of the meal. Line cooks can be chefs working their way up from lower positions and lower-skilled jobs and don't necessarily need a culinary degree; however, if the Line Chef aspires to a Sous or Head Chef position, he or she will need a Culinary Degree and internship or apprenticeship (although the position of Line Chef may indeed be an apprenticeship under the Head Chef).

Here are a few of the various Line Chef positions:

Saute Chef. Responsible for all sautéed items & their sauce. This is usually the highest position of all the stations.

Fish Chef. Prepares fish dishes & often does all fish butchering as well as appropriate sauce. This station may be combined with the saucier position.

Roast Chef. Prepares roasted & braised meats & their appropriate sauce.

Grill Chef. Prepares all grilled foods, this position may be combined with the rotisseur.

Fry Chef. Prepares all fried items, position may be combined with the rotisseur position.

Vegetable Chef. Prepares hot appetizers & often prepares the soups, vegetables, pastas & starches. In a full brigade system a potager would prepare soups & a legumier would prepare vegetables.

Roundsman. Also referred to as a swing cook, fills in as needed on station in kitchen.

Cold-Foods Chef. May also be referred to as the pantry chef, they are responsible for preparing cold foods, including salads, cold appetizers, pâtés & other charcuterie items.

Butcher. Butchers meats, poultry & sometimes fish. May also be responsible for breeding meats & fish.

Pastry Chef. Prepare baked goods, pastries & desserts. The pastry chef often supervises a separate team in their own kitchen or separate shop in larger operations. Some kitchens may have an executive pastry chef. This station may be broken down into smaller areas of specialization such as:

Confiseur. Prepares candies, & petit fours.

As you move forward into your culinary career, we will be providing exciting information that you can really use. So thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter, and good luck in your culinary future!

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Boulangier. Prepares unsweetened doughs for breads and rolls.

Glacier. Prepares frozen & cold desserts.

Decorateur. Prepares show pieces & specialty cakes.

Short-Order Cooks

Short Order Cooks have little to no cooking experience or education. They often work in lower level dining or fast food restaurants. No degree is required. Climbing up to higher level cooking positions without a degree or certification is neither favorable nor easy for Short-Order Cooks.

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