

How to get into this job

Chefs often begin their training as an apprentice, and study towards a National Certificate in Hospitality - Cookery (Level 4). This combination of work and study usually takes two to three years to complete. The Modern Apprenticeship scheme is for people aged 16 to 21 years who want to become an apprentice. Chefs may also train by completing a one-year, full-time Level 3 or 4 national certificate in cookery or food preparation with a training provider. Training to be a chef is also available with the NZ Army and Royal NZ Navy.

Secondary education: There are no specific secondary education requirements, but some training providers may require NCEA Level 1 numeracy and literacy credits as a course prerequisite.

Pay and job outlook

The majority of chefs work as commis chefs, chefs de partie or sous chefs, and earn an hourly rate. In April 2008 the minimum wage rose to \$12 an hour before tax and chef rates have increased to reflect this. Head or executive chefs tend to be paid an annual salary, usually between \$30,000 and \$80,000. Pay for all chefs depends on the size, type and location of the establishment they work in. According to the Department of Labour, the average pay for chefs in 2006 was \$27,300 a year.

Source: Department of Labour, Occupational Indicators Tool

The high demand for chefs continues to grow, fuelled by people spending more money eating out, low enrolments in chef training, and many New Zealand chefs emigrating for better pay and work experience.

Related jobs

Baker, Bartender, Café Manager, Caterer, Fast Food Manager, Fish Shop Worker, Food and Beverage Manager, Food Counter Assistant, Kitchen Assistant, Restaurant Manager, Short Order Cook, Waiter/Waitress

Further contacts

Hospitality Association of New Zealand

WELLINGTON, 0800 500 503, nsc@hanz.org.nz,
www.hanz.org.nz

Hospitality Standards Institute

WELLINGTON, 0800 275 4474, (04) 385 9563,
www.hsi.co.nz/

Restaurant Association of New Zealand

AUCKLAND, 0800 737 827, restaurant.assoc@xtra.co.nz,
www.restaurantnz.co.nz

Chef

Pūkenga Tao Kai

Other names for this job

Chef de Partie, Commis Chef, Demi Chef, Executive Chef, Head Chef, Sous Chef

What people in this job do

Chefs prepare and cook food in hotels, restaurants, cafés and bars.

Chefs may do some or all of the following:

- prepare and cook food according to customers' orders
- arrange food on plates
- design, plan and price menus
- train and supervise staff
- keep work areas clean and tidy
- buy food supplies and cooking equipment
- supervise cleaning and dishwashing
- keep records of supplies.

Specialisations: Chefs may specialise in areas such as pastry or fish.

Personal requirements

Chefs need to have:

- food preparation, cooking and food presentation skills
- knowledge of budgeting, stock management and how to price and set up a menu
- understanding of hygiene and health and safety regulations
- knowledge of new developments in food nutrition, food technology and cooking methods
- planning skills, good communication and people management skills.

Chefs need to be:

- creative and open-minded
- able to follow instructions
- willing to learn new cooking methods, recipes and menus
- reliable
- able to work well under pressure
- organised, quick and efficient, while still being patient and careful.

Common sense is also important.

Chefs need to have a good sense of taste and smell. They also need to have a reasonable level of strength, fitness and stamina as they often need to carry heavy items such as pots and bulk ingredients. Chefs spend long hours on their feet.