

START SOMETHING SPECTACULAR!

CAREERS IN HOSPITALITY – COOK

If you like cooking, want to work in an energetic and dynamic environment, are creative, like doing things with your hands and don't mind working hard, you could become a cook.

Cooks prepare and cook food in a commercial setting. Cooks may work in restaurants, cafes, hotels, motels, clubs, cafes, hospitals, take-away outlets, function centres, catering firms, flight catering centres and ships.

The range of duties carried out by cooks will vary depending on where they work. In hotels, clubs, restaurants and takeaway food outlets, cooks often specialise in preparing and cooking a particular type of food (e.g. fried chicken, pizza or barbecued meat). They may also specialise in national cuisine (e.g. Thai, Vietnamese, French, or Italian). Other specialisations include entrees, desserts, international and pastry cooking.

Duties and tasks

A cook may perform the following tasks:

- check food to make sure of its quality
- regulate temperatures of ovens, grills and other cooking equipment
- prepare food for cooking
- cook food by a range of methods (i.e. baking, braising, frying, roasting or steaming)
- divide food into portions and make sure that the food is well-presented
- clean food preparation areas and equipment
- store food in temperature-controlled facilities
- receive and store supplies
- make sure kitchen is hygienic and functional
- plan menus and estimate food requirements
- prepare food to meet special dietary requirements
- train and supervise other staff.

Work Conditions

Commercial kitchens can be very hot and noisy, and working conditions may be uncomfortable.

Cooks are required to do shift work, including weekends and public holidays. The work can be tiring, and involve long hours, and it may be stressful, particularly at peak hours of the day. Cooks spend a lot of time on their feet. On the other hand, it's a very sociable occupation where you work in a team environment.

Cooks work with sharp knives and around hot appliances. Cuts and burns are the most common occupational dangers. High standards of personal hygiene are a must, as a lack of attention to health and hygiene can spread disease and put clients at risk.

It is challenging work as you have to work long hours and nights and weekends, however it is extremely rewarding and offers great career options and job satisfaction.

Personal Requirements

- a high level of personal cleanliness
- able to plan your time and work under pressure
- good communication skills
- punctuality
- flexibility to perform shift work (sometimes on a 24-hour rotating roster)
- able to stay calm in difficult situations
- able to work well in a team

Education and training

Cooks generally require formal qualifications. There are a number of nationally-recognised qualifications available, depending upon the type of cookery you choose to specialise in.

Certificate II in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations). This certificate will enable you to be a short order cook, a breakfast cook or a cook in a café or bistro. It is also the pathway to Certificates III in Asian Cookery, Patisserie or Catering

Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery) is the standard "trade" qualification required to become a qualified cook

Certificate III in Hospitality (Asian Cookery) is the trade qualification for those specialising in Asian cookery

Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Catering) will enable you to work as a caterer in a catering firm

Certificate III in Hospitality (Patisserie) will enable you to work as a patissier, specialising in fine pastries, cakes and desserts

Employment Opportunities

There are excellent job opportunities for cooks, and good cooks are always in demand. Continued growth in the tourist industry has generated a strong demand for cooks, and there is currently a shortage of cooks in all States and Territories.

Cooks can work in a variety of locations and can become a chef or catering manager, or can own their own restaurant or catering company. They can also be specialists in areas such as ethnic cooking, Asian cookery, baking and patisserie or dietary catering. They can even be TV chefs! There is lots of variety and good travel opportunities. Many young cooks get experience overseas before progressing in their chosen career area. With experience and further training, qualified cooks may be promoted to supervisory positions. Movement between employers within the industry may be required in order to gain experience and promotion.

For more information

Career Gateway www.careergateway.serviceskills.com.au	Career Gateway helps parents and career advisors, employers and students with career information
Australian Job Outlook www.jobsearch.gov.au	Australian government website that provides information on job prospects, weekly earnings, type of work and other useful occupational information.
Wagenet www.wagenet.gov.au	The aim of this site is to help you find information about wages and conditions of employment.
Year 12 What Next? www.year12whatnext.gov.au	Australian government website designed to help Year 12 students plan their post school education and training
My Future www.myfuture.edu.au	Australian government website containing comprehensive career information.
My Hospitality www.myhospitality.com.au	Free Australian hospitality industry and trade directory, employment provider and information source

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