

Job Title: **Restaurant Cook**

Work Conditions Pathway: INDOOR/HEAVY WORK/MOSTLY WITH CO-WORKERS (Disk 3)

Occupational Outlook Handbook Information

Nature of Work: Restaurant cooks measure, mix, and cook ingredients according to recipes. They use a variety of pots, pans, cutlery, and other equipment, including ovens, broilers, grills, slicers, grinders, and blenders. Cooks are often responsible for directing the work of other kitchen workers, estimating food requirements, and ordering food supplies. Some cooks also help plan meals and develop menus. The type of restaurant in which they work determines the specific responsibilities of cooks. Restaurant cooks usually prepare a wider selection of dishes, cooking most orders individually.

Working Conditions: Working conditions depend on the type and quantity of food being prepared and the local laws governing food service operations. Workers must usually withstand the pressure and strain of working in close quarters, standing for hours at a time, lifting heavy pots and kettles, and working near hot ovens and grills. Job hazards include slips and falls, cuts, and burns, but injuries are seldom serious. Work hours in restaurants may include early mornings, late evenings, holidays, and weekends,

Employment Outlook: Employment of chefs, cooks, and other kitchen workers is expected to increase at an average rate compared with all occupations through 2008.

Earnings: Average wages of restaurant cooks were \$7.81 per hour, plus or minus \$1.58, in 1998.

Training, Qualifications, and Advancement: Most chefs, cooks, and other kitchen workers start as fast food or short order cooks or in another lower skilled kitchen position. These positions require little education or training, and most skills are learned on the job. After acquiring some basic food handling, preparation, and cooking skills, these workers may be able to advance to an assistant cook or short order cook position. A high school diploma is recommended for those planning a career as a cook or chef. Advancement opportunities for chefs and cooks are better than most other food and beverage preparation and service occupations. Many chefs and cooks acquire high paying positions and new cooking skills by moving from one job to another.

Representative Job Tasks – Job Carving Possibilities:

1. Prepare, season, and cook food
2. Follow food orders
3. Gather food supplies from storage areas
4. Use knife to cut vegetables, meats, etc.
5. Use kitchen utensils to weigh and mix ingredients
6. Use hot grills to fry foods
7. Operate ovens to bake foods
8. Portion, arrange, and garnish food
9. Place food supplies in food storage areas
10. Clean and monitor food preparation areas

Related Occupations: Butchers and meat cutters, cannery workers, and industrial bakers.

Sources of Additional Information:

- The O*Net Dictionary of Occupational Titles, <http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/>
- The Occupational Outlook Handbook, <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos151.htm>

Restaurant Cook



Prepare, season, and cook food



Follow food orders



Gather food from storage



Use knife to cut vegetables, meats, etc.



Weigh ingredients



Arrange food dishes



Clean and monitor food preparation area