

Dear Students

Are you hungry for a challenge? If you're passionate about food and work best as part of a team in a fast-paced environment, a job in the catering industry could be for you. Not sure where to start? Don't worry, we've got you covered.

In this edition we will learn what education and experience you will need to become a Chef.
- Martina

Becoming a chef involves more than just learning to cook and loving food. In addition to potentially being trained in different culinary techniques and cooking disciplines, aspiring chefs might also need strong business skills, creativity, leadership and time-management abilities. It can be a challenging career, but also a very rewarding one.

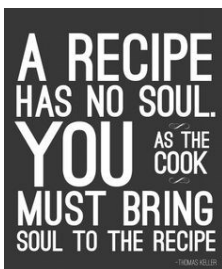
Top tips for finding a job in the catering industry:

- Be practical - Don't be afraid to start at the bottom. It's not unheard of for Kitchen Porters to go on to be *Chef de Partie's* in a matter of years.
- Demonstrate your skills - Pick out the most relevant attributes from the job description and tailor your CV to emphasize them.
- Focus - Where do you want your career to take you? 'I want to work in catering' will not give you the direction you need to succeed.
- Make sure you're up-to-date - Keep an eye on the latest developments in the food industry and (for chefs) try and incorporate any new trends into your own dishes.

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- Start learning – If you need an extra qualification to back up your soft skills, take a course to help take you to the next level.
- Learn by doing – In this industry, experience is everything. Sign up for an internship or voluntary/work-experience position and learn the ropes. With the right mentor, it may even lead to something more permanent.



CHEF / COOK



Chefs are responsible for the planning, preparation and presentation of food in restaurants and hotels. They must know for whom they are catering and plan the service and menu accordingly. Their work may vary from the preparation of traditional dishes to take-always and also depends on the nature and size of the restaurant, hotel or guesthouse.

Chefs plan and develop menus, decide on the day's specialty and estimate the amount of food needed. They compute the cost of food, purchase food supplies, prepare food or supervise and coordinate the preparation of food by cooks and other kitchen staff and then check the quality of food prepared. They give instructions on the sizes of the portions and supervise the arrangement of the food on platters and plates. They organize the cleaning of the kitchen and ensure that high-quality service and food are provided at all times,

*while maintaining hygienic standards. They may be required to hire and train the cooks who work in the kitchens with them. The **'Chef de Cuisine'** or head chef is in charge of the kitchen and is also responsible for the preparation of food, cost accounting, for compiling lists and ordering perishable and dry products; and to see to it that all equipment is clean and in working order.*

*The **'Sous Chef'** or second chef assists the head chef and the **'Chef de Partie'** is a departmental head in charge of a team of cooks and kitchen workers. The "Chef de Partie" is responsible for the preparation of all meat dishes and sauces, as well as all vegetables and associated foods such as salads, cold foods, cakes, fruit dishes and various types of soup. This chef also approves every dish that leaves the kitchen and decides what the day's specialty should be. Smaller restaurants usually have only one chef or cook, who prepares all the food with the help of a short order cook and one or two kitchen helpers.*

Although today's freezing facilities and microwave ovens allow for partial preparation of dishes beforehand, special dishes require special skills from a chef. Many chefs have earned fame both for themselves and the hotels and restaurants where they work, because of their skill in creating new dishes and improving familiar ones.

JOB CHARACTERISTICS

- have a flair for and interest in baking and preparing foodstuffs
- have creative and artistic talent
- have a keen sense of taste and smell
- have physical stamina to stand for hours at a time
- have a high regard for personal hygiene and cleanliness
- be able to use own initiative, with minimum supervision
- have organizational ability, but also be flexible
- be interested in learning and adapting to an ever changing market's expectations
- work well with others
- work well under pressure
- communicate ideas clearly
- have a good memory and eye-hand coordination

REQUIREMENTS & TRAINING

Secondary Education

To be admitted to the training programme, offered by the **HTC**, candidates must be able to read, write, speak and understand English and/or Afrikaans. In South Africa the Hotel Industry requires applicants to be at least 16 years old, and to have at least a Grade 10 or equivalent qualification. A Grade 12 or equivalent qualification is required for technikon studies. The South African National Defence Force requires a Grade 10 certificate for admittance to the training school for cooks.

TERTIARY

The Basic and Advanced Skills Cookery modules are offered by the HTC through the Polytechnic of Namibia. Five modules have to be completed. The duration is 12 weeks. After completion of the five modules and adequate practical experience, individuals can accept employment as cooks.

Appropriate courses can be followed in South Africa at universities, universities of technology, FET Colleges, private or correspondence colleges :

Chef and Assistant Chef courses are offered at Northlink, Professional Cookery courses at False Bay and Northlink, Kitchen Skills at False Bay, Food Management / Services at False Bay, VUT and CPUT, Food Technology at DUT, CPUT, TUT and UJ, Catering Studies at Boland, SW Gauteng, Maluti and Vuselela.

Hospitality Management courses are offered by DUT, VUT, UJ, S Cape FET College.

The N. Dip.: Hotel MaA National Certificate and a National Higher Certificate in Hotel Operations, a National Diploma in Hotel Management and Tourism Management as well as a National Certificate in Tourism Management is offered by the Polytechnic of Namibia.

It is important for students to know where their talents and interests lie. This is because some schools focus on innovative cooking skills, whereas others offer a more rounded approach to cooking, service and catering management.

PERSONALITY

Prospective chefs/cooks should be interested in cooking and baking and have the physical stamina to work long hours. They should also be able to work systematically and be able to endure a fair amount of pressure. Chefs/cooks should be able to function in a team context.

WORK OPPORTUNITIES

Prospective chefs/cooks can be employed at hotels, restaurants, clubs, industrial caterers, hospitals, airways, marine and rail catering, as well as the civil service (hotels, etc.) Those with enough experience can start their own businesses as caterers or restaurant owners.

INSTITUTIONS THAT PROVIDE TRAINING

It is expected of the **Namibia Training Authority** as the official regulating body in the Vocational Education and Training sector, to ensure that all training providers operating within the borders of our country, indeed meet quality training standards. The following institutions are now registered with the NTA and have been issued with registration certificates :

Nakayale Vocational Training Centre

Tel: (065) 250 067

Wolwedans Foundation Trust

Tel#: (061) 300 556

Zambezi Vocational Training Centre

Tel: (066) 253 264

Kambaku Hospitality College

Tel: (067) 306 292

Valombola Vocational Training Centre

Tel#: (065) 230 033

African Hospitality & Tourism Centre

Tel #: 061-256849

POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA :

Currently the Department of Hospitality & Tourism offers the following programs and courses:

Two main qualifications with multiple exits as shown below:

Certificate in Hospitality Operations (Full Time Only) 05CHOP

Bachelor of Hospitality Management (Full Time Only) (Phased in 2012) 07BHMN

For more detailed information go to <http://som.polytechnic.edu.na/?q=hospitality-tourism-programme>

Specific Industry tailored short courses:

Meat and vegetables course: 3week course that covers all the mayor cooking methods for meat and vegetables, small theory component on 3 days; includes theory and recipe manual

Bakery and Desserts: 2 weeks course that covers an extensive range of bakery and dessert items as well as plenty of garnishes and decorations; includes recipe booklet

Menu Course: 1 week course; covers a 3 to 4 course menu every day and is ideal as starting point; includes recipe booklet

Vegetarian course: 1 week course covering a variety of vegetarian starters and main courses; includes recipe booklet

Basic skills chef's certificate course: 6 Modules each 2 weeks long spread over the entire year.

Namibian Institute of Culinary Education (nice)

The **Namibian Institute of Culinary Education (nice)** is a chef finishing and training school linked to a commercial restaurant in the heart of Windhoek, which has established itself as a popular destination of culinary excellence.

The purpose of **nice** is to produce excellent and professional chefs for the high end of the Namibian tourism market. Students are trained in food preparation and food and beverage management. In order to give trainees a real life exposure to their profession, the up-market restaurant is the driving force behind the training facility. Currently **nice** and the **Wolwedans Collection** work together on a joint training program, exposing trainees to both lodge and city based hospitality and restaurant operations.

For questions on their vocational training programme please contact foundation@wolwedans.org

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

HOW TO BECOME A CHEF

There's no recipe for culinary success, but there are a few key ingredients.

ARE YOU...

- EAGER**
to discover new and inventive ways to prepare and serve food?
- ABLE**
to invade the barest cupboard and come up with a dish even the pickiest eater would gobble up?
- CONVINCED**
you could win any cooking show contest, from "Iron Chef" to "Cupcake Wars"?

THEN YOU MIGHT MAKE A GOOD CHEF!

Reference: *Min of Labour & Social Welfare - Careers in Namibia 2005/2006*

<http://som.polytechnic.edu.na/?q=hospitality-tourism-programme>

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