



# FOOD SERVICE

## KITCHEN WORKERS, FOOD COUNTER ATTENDANTS, COOKS, CHEFS, FOOD & BEVERAGE SERVICE



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  - Industry Outlook
- **Career Planning Information**
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A compilation organized  
by TQM Consulting in association with  
the Kamloops Work Search Centres  
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Pictures Source: [http://www.guidetobceconomy.org/major\\_industries/accommodation.htm](http://www.guidetobceconomy.org/major_industries/accommodation.htm)

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The Food Service Industry is one of the fastest growing in North America. An increasing number of people are dining out, which has created a great demand for workers in this field.

Food service and drinking establishments account for eight out of ten jobs in this industry. These establishments provide food, snacks, and beverages intended for immediate consumption. These include full-service restaurants, fast food outlets, delis, ice-cream trucks, cafeterias and take-outs. They also include contractors who provide meals to hospitals or airlines and catering firms. Night clubs, lounges, bars and pubs are also included in this industry.

## Industry Outlook

Job openings for Chefs, Cooks and Food Preparation Workers are expected to be plentiful through 2012. While job growth will create new positions, the overwhelming majority of job openings will stem from the need to replace workers who leave this large occupational group. Minimal education and training requirements, combined with a large number of part time positions, make employment as Chefs, Cooks and Food Preparation Workers attractive to people seeking first time or short term employment, a source of additional income, or a flexible schedule. Many of these workers will transfer to other occupations or stop working, creating numerous openings for those entering the field.

Overall employment is expected to increase about as fast as the average for all occupations over the 2002-2012 period. Employment growth will be spurred by increases in population, household income and leisure time that will allow people to dine out and take vacations more often. In addition, growth in the number of two income households will lead more families to opt for the convenience of dining out.

Specifically, in Kamloops many restaurant owners have commented that there is a severe shortage of experienced cooks. Many are willing to train the right person that has an excellent attitude and a strong work ethic. There is no indication this shortage will decrease in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.jobfutures.ca](http://www.jobfutures.ca) and [http://www.guidetobceconomy.org/major\\_industries/accommodation.htm](http://www.guidetobceconomy.org/major_industries/accommodation.htm) (Accessed August 2008)

## Food Counter Attendants & Kitchen Helpers<sup>2</sup>

### Job Description

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These workers take customers orders and prepare foods such as sandwiches, hamburgers, salads, milk shakes and ice cream dishes. They serve customers at counters or buffet tables and may receive payment for food items purchased.

Also included are the kitchen and food service helpers who perform routine, repetitive tasks such as readying ingredients for complex dishes, slicing and dicing vegetables, preparing salads and cold items under the direction of Chefs and Cooks. They weigh and measure ingredients, tend to pots and pans, stir and strain soups and sauces. Food Preparation Workers may cut and grind meats, poultry and seafood in preparation for cooking. Their responsibilities also include cleaning work areas, equipment, utensils, dishes and silverware.

Food Service helpers clear and clean tables and trays in eating establishments and bring clean dishes, flatware and other items to serving areas and tables. They replenish condiments and other supplies at tables and serving areas and remove dishes before and after courses. They also perform other duties, such as scraping and stacking dishes, carrying linen to and from laundry areas and running errands.

Dishwashers wash dishes, glassware, flatware, pots and pans using a dishwasher or by hand. They place dishes in storage areas, scour pots and pans and may clean and polish silverware.

### Sample Titles of Food Preparation Workers:

- Cook's Helper
- Cafeteria Counter Attendant
- Food Service Helpers
- Food Service Preparer
- Kitchen Helper
- Food Counter Attendant
- Dishwashers
- Busboy/Busgirl
- Bartender Helper
- Sandwich Maker

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<sup>2</sup> Source: [www.workfutures.bc.ca](http://www.workfutures.bc.ca) (Accessed August 2008)

## **Working Conditions**

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Food counter attendants and kitchen helpers often work in difficult conditions. Many food service locations have modern equipment and convenient work areas while others are not so well equipped. Workers often face the pressure and strain of working in close quarters during busy periods, standing for hours at a time, working in hot environments near ovens and grills. Counter attendants are in constant contact with customers and frequently work in busy, high-volume fast food restaurants.

Part-time work is common. Work hours in restaurants may include late evening, weekend and holiday work. Some may work on-call or work split shifts (working several hours, with a few hours off and then return to work). These positions also have a seasonal component driven by tourist seasons, as well may provide opportunities for those who need seasonal employment including high school and post-secondary students.

Traditionally, the food service industry has relied on young people as its main source of labour however, some fast food restaurants actively recruit older workers and even retired workers who are available for part-time work.

## **Education & Training**

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The education required for these positions is mainly on-the-job training. Some establishments are taking a proactive approach to retaining employees by improving the level of training for advancement within the industry to help become more attractive for long-term career-minded individuals to stay in this industry.

## **Wages**

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Average earnings in 2000 were \$9,700 per year for food service counter attendants and kitchen and food service helpers. There is a lower pay rate and high portion of part-time employment for this sector of the Food Service industry. Earnings for those employed full-time were \$20,900 per year on average. In some large restaurants and hotels, workers belong to unions and may receive high wages. They can also supplement their earnings with customer tips. In some establishments, such as large hotels, servers contribute some of their tips to a tip pool which is distributed among other food and beverage service workers and kitchen staff. Those who work at fast food outlets, are usually paid minimum wage rates and do not receive tips.

## Food & Beverage Service

### Job Description

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These workers include Maître D'hôtel and hosts/hostesses who greet patrons and escort them to tables as well as supervise and coordinate the activities of food and beverage servers. They are employed in restaurants, hotel dining rooms, private clubs, cocktail lounges and similar establishments.

Bartenders mix and serve alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. They are employed in restaurants, hotels, bars taverns, private clubs, banquet halls and other licenced establishments.

Food and Beverage Servers take patrons' food and beverage orders and serve orders to patrons. They are employed in restaurants, hotels, bars, taverns, private clubs, banquet halls and similar establishments.

#### Sample Titles of Food & Beverage Service Workers:

- Restaurant hosts/hostesses
- Barkeeper
- Banquet Server
- Waiter/Waitress

### Working Conditions

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Much of the work in this occupation is seasonal part-time positions with some evening, weekend, holiday, and split shifts. Most workers are in constant contact with customers so they should be prepared to interact with various types of people. During busy periods servers are under pressure to be quick and efficient. They should expect to have reasonable physical stamina for carrying heavy trays and plates of food and be able to work on their feet for extended periods of time.

### Education & Training

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**Serving It Right Certificate** is a British Columbia mandatory self-study training program for anyone who will be working in an establishment that serves/sells liquor. "The Responsible Beverage Service Program" was developed by the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, in consultation with the various hospitality industry associations, to help ensure alcohol is served both professionally and responsibly.

Both locations of the Kamloops Work Search Centres have free copies of the manual for our clients to take with them.

**Bartender certification** is available at the following locations:

Bartending (12 Sessions)	Thompson Rivers University	(250) 828-5213
Fine Art Bartending School (Kelowna)		(250) 1-866-881-6699

## Wages<sup>3</sup>

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Food and beverage servers derive their earnings from a combination of hourly wages and customer tips. Their wage rate and the amount of tips they receive vary with the type of work and establishment. Some establishments have a tip pool which is distributed among other food and beverage service workers and kitchen staff. In some larger restaurants and hotels, food and beverage servers belong to unions, so they may receive high wages.

Bartenders receive higher wage rates than service in most cases. Bartenders in public bars may also receive tips, either from direct service or through a tip jar. The average wage for Bartenders is \$10 - \$12 not including tips and incentives.



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<sup>3</sup> Wage source: [www.go2hr.ca](http://www.go2hr.ca)

## **Chefs & Cooks**

### **Chefs Job Description**

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Chefs plan and direct food preparation and cooking activities and cook meals and specialty foods. They are employed in restaurants, hotels, hospitals and other health care institutions, central food commissaries, clubs and similar establishments and on ships.

**Titles of Chefs include:**

- Corporate Chef
- Master Chef
- Sous-Chef
- Executive Chef

**Main duties for Chefs may include:**

- Plan and direct food preparation and cooking activities
- Plan menus and ensure food meets quality standards
- Estimate food and labour costs
- Supervise activities of staff and may recruit and hire employees

### **Cooks Job Description**

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Cooks prepare and cook a wide variety of foods. They are employed in restaurants, hotels, hospitals and other health care institutions, central food commissaries, educational institutions and other establishments. Cooks are also employed aboard ships and at construction and logging campsites.

**Titles of Cooks include:**

- Apprentice Cook
- First Cook
- Grill Cook
- Line Cook
- Short Order Cook

**Main duties for Cooks may include:**

- Prepare and cook meals and individual dishes and foods
- Supervise kitchen helpers
- Oversee subordinate personnel in preparation, cooking and handling of food
- May plan menus, determine size of food portions, estimate food requirements and costs, monitor and order supplies

## Essential Skills

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Working in the Food Service Industry, (Kitchen Helper, Cook or Chef) requires a few essential skills to perform at a high, efficient manner. Individuals need to be physically fit and be able to stand for extended periods of time during the shift. Team work is a high priority. Working well with others in a very high pressure job is also important. Having excellent organizational skills is essential and one must be able to accept constructive criticism and be adaptable to the quickly changing needs in a fast paced environment. Being extremely focused, attentive to detail, well disciplined and reliable are considered definite assets.

Other skills necessary for this type of work include:

- Strong oral communication
- Problem solving
- Job task planning and organizing

## Education & Training<sup>4</sup>

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Most entry level and food preparation positions require little education or training, most skills are learned on the job. Training generally starts with basic sanitation and workplace safety and continues with instruction on food handling, preparation and cooking procedures. A high school diploma is not required (in most cases) for beginning jobs but it is recommended for those planning a career as a Cook or Chef.

Cooks and Chefs require many years of training and experience and an intense desire to cook. Some Chefs and Cooks may start training in High School or Post Secondary Institutions. Others may receive formal training through independent cooking schools, professional vocational institutes or 2 to 4 year college degree programs in hospitality or culinary arts. In addition, some large hotels and restaurants operate their own training and job placement programs for Cooks and Chefs. Most formal training programs require some form of apprenticeship, internship or out placement program that are jointly offered by the school and affiliated restaurants.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: [www.aved.gov.bc.ca/industrytraining](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/industrytraining). Accessed August 2008

## **Apprenticeships**

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Apprenticeships are paid work-based training combined with post secondary education. Apprentices spend roughly 80% of their time learning skills on the job and 20% in a classroom setting. When an apprentice finishes their entire program, including all required workplace and in school training, they are required to write a completion exam. Upon successful completion the apprentice is awarded their Certificate of Apprenticeship, as well as their Certificate of Qualification and Inter-provincial Standard Endorsement (Red Seal). Certification increases earning potential and makes it much more likely for you to get hired for you will also be able to work in any province/territory across Canada.

## **Web Sites**

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Industry Training – Ministry of Advanced Education	<a href="http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca">www.aved.gov.bc.ca</a>
The Inter-Provincial Standards Red Seal Program	<a href="http://www.red-seal.ca">www.red-seal.ca</a>
Canadian Culinary Institute Directory	<a href="http://www.chef2chef.net">www.chef2chef.net</a>
Canadian Culinary Federation	<a href="http://www.ccfcc.ca">www.ccfcc.ca</a>
British Columbia Chefs Association	<a href="http://www.bcchefs.com">www.bcchefs.com</a>
Chef Global Recruitment Service	<a href="http://www.chefsemployment.com">www.chefsemployment.com</a>
Canadian Association of Foodservice Professionals	<a href="http://www.cafp.com">www.cafp.com</a>

## **Educational Institutions**

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The following institutions offer a wide variety of culinary arts programs and courses for aspiring cooks and chefs.

### **British Columbia Colleges**

Camosun College (Victoria)	<a href="http://www.camosun.bc.ca">www.camosun.bc.ca</a>
College of New Caledonia (Prince George)	<a href="http://www.cnc.bc.ca">www.cnc.bc.ca</a>
College of the Rockies (Cranbrook)	<a href="http://www.cotr.bc.ca">www.cotr.bc.ca</a>
Malaspina University College (Nanaimo)	<a href="http://www.mala.ca">www.mala.ca</a>
North Island College (Vancouver Island)	<a href="http://www.nic.bc.ca">www.nic.bc.ca</a>
Northern Lights College (Dawson Creek)	<a href="http://www.nlc.bc.ca">www.nlc.bc.ca</a>
Northwest Community College (Terrace)	<a href="http://www.nwcc.bc.ca">www.nwcc.bc.ca</a>
Okanagan University College (Kelowna)	<a href="http://www.ouc.bc.ca">www.ouc.bc.ca</a>
Selkirk College (Castlegar)	<a href="http://www.selkirk.bc.ca">www.selkirk.bc.ca</a>
Thompson Rivers University (Kamloops)	<a href="http://www.tru.ca">www.tru.ca</a>
Vancouver Community College (Vancouver)	<a href="http://www.vcc.bc.ca">www.vcc.bc.ca</a>

### **Vancouver Culinary Schools**

Northwest Culinary Academy of Vancouver	<a href="http://www.nwcav.com">www.nwcav.com</a>
Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts	<a href="http://www.picachef.com">www.picachef.com</a>
Dubrulle International Culinary Arts	<a href="http://www.aiv.aii.edu">www.aiv.aii.edu</a>
Villa Delia Tuscany Cooking School	<a href="http://www.umberto.com">www.umberto.com</a>
Art Institute of Vancouver	<a href="http://www.artinstitutes.edu">www.artinstitutes.edu</a>

## Kamloops Employers Hiring Practices<sup>5</sup>

A survey of Kamloops Employers has been conducted and the following information has been provided regarding employment and hiring practices.

- The busy season for restaurants in Kamloops is the summer months (June, July and August). Hiring for those busy times starts a couple months prior, in April and May. September is also a good time to apply with many of their employees going back to school.
- Applying in person to the restaurant is the best way to secure employment in this industry. Employers want to meet you face-to-face as opposed to e-mail, fax or mailing resumes. \*Avoid lunch and dinner times when applying.
- Referrals from co-workers and word of mouth are the most common way employees are hired. Some employers also rely on their employee's opinions as to whether you'll make a good addition to their team. Always make sure you make a good first impression to the existing employees as well as the interviewer.
- "Food Safe" certification is becoming necessary to work in the kitchen; ask Work Search Centre Staff for Food Safe information.
- "Red Seal Chef Training" is essential if you want to be a cook in higher-end restaurants. Training costs and the time needed off work is often provided by the employer to achieve this certification.
- Two to three "business" references are recommended on your resume. The preference is for previous employers as opposed to personal references.
- The most important quality an employer looks for in a new employee is "people skills". Customers are considered guests and excellent customer service is essential. You must be friendly, outgoing and sociable.
- For the "kitchen" staff the most important qualities are consistency, reliability, punctuality, and willingness to accept change and criticism.
- The average wage in this industry is \$8.00/hr. to start. Gratuities (tips) are usually shared amongst all the restaurant team members (depending on the employer).

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<sup>5</sup> This employer survey was conducted from January 2005 - March 2006 by Connections Employment Services and Kamloops Work Search Centre Staff.