

Careers in the Food Industry

A VARIETY OF JOBS exist in the food industry: from the top chef to the person who bussing your table as well as the farmers who grow the food and the produce managers who sell it. In this unit, you will learn more about the available careers in the food industry, as you prepare to conduct further research about a career that interests you.



Objective:



Describe careers in the food industry.

Key Terms:



advancement
earnings
employment

job outlook
nature of work
qualifications

related occupations
training
working conditions

Learning About Careers in the Food Industry

You may be able to list several jobs in the food industry, but you may not know all the job specifics (e.g., working conditions, advancement opportunities, and salaries). If you are interested in a career in the food industry, research your options to find the specific job for which you are best suited.

FINDING INFORMATION

The Internet is a valuable resource with up-to-date information about the various aspects of food industry careers. Many Web sites can help as you investigate careers. When you find a helpful Web site, there may be links to other sources of information. After you learn to investi-



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION: Reliable Sources

While the Internet is a great source for information on nearly any subject, keep in mind that some sources are more reliable than others. Some sites may post inaccurate information that may accidentally or even intentionally mislead readers. When you are researching any subject online, you should seek reliable sources. For example, it is better to use a government or university site than a blog by someone with no formal training on the subject.

Visit the following websites to determine whether you consider them to be reliable sources. Then conduct your own search to find at least two more examples:

www.IL.WorkInfo.com

www.dol.gov

www.ed.gov

gate the potential careers in the food industry, you can narrow your search to the area that most interests you. Then you can use the Internet to conduct in-depth research on that career.

CONDITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Working conditions are the environment and situation where an individual is employed. Examples of conditions are working inside, outside, alone, or with others. Hours of work may vary, depending on the type of facility. Some small operations have a few employees, while large operations have many employees. In addition, some jobs are in large cities, but others are in small towns.

Establishment Size

The establishment size may determine the types of equipment used. For instance, larger facilities may require that workers be able to run various kinds of equipment not present in smaller kitchens. In addition, conditions may vary because of the type and amount of food prepared.

Physical Conditions

Consider physical conditions of the job. For example, some jobs require standing for long hours as well as heavy lifting in hot kitchens and other possible safety issues.

Hours

The hours will vary by the facility type. For instance, a public place (e.g., a school or a hospital) will have different hours than a restaurant. You may be required to work longer hours if

you are in charge of a kitchen or restaurant. However, some positions may offer flexible hours, which entice part-time help (e.g., retired people, students, and working mothers).

Training

Training is preparation for a certain job. It can be on-the-job training (accomplished in a short time), formal training, or academic training (resulting in a college degree). Fast-food work usually involves on-the-job training. Bussers, servers, cashiers, dishwashers, and hosts are all examples of positions with on-the-job training. Food-service managers, chefs, and cooks would receive formal training. It could start as on-the-job training and extend to seminars, franchise-training programs, college classes, and advanced training. Junior college and four-year college degrees incorporate business training with the specific skills needed for particular jobs.



FIGURE 1. Some food industry jobs offer flexible, part-time hours, making them good choices for students.

The Nature of Work

The **nature of work** is a simplified explanation of a specific job. A server, for example, takes orders for food, delivers food and drinks to customers, and often cleans tables.

Advancement

Advancement is progress to a higher level job. For example, a server could become a trainer for new servers after several years on the job.

Qualifications

Qualifications are necessary skills and abilities for a certain job.

OUTLOOK

Employment is a breakdown of each area within a specific career field. The latest government figures are on many Web sites, making current information readily available. A **job outlook** is an informational tool that shows the current need for certain careers and the future outlook. There will always be a need for fast-food and short-order workers because there is a high turnover. Why? These jobs require little skill or experience and generally offer lower pay



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION: Reliable Sources

How many food industry careers can you name? If you are having trouble creating a list that goes beyond cook and waiter, visit the following website. It offers 150 examples of food-related jobs, including some you probably have not considered. Read the list as you begin your research for a career in the food industry.

<http://www.globalgourmet.com/food/cookbook/2008/food-jobs/culinary-job-list.html#axzz27mDEiRkb>

as a result. Because many people do not stay in the same job for long periods of time, the jobs are available more often. In contrast, the more advanced positions do not have a high turnover rate, so these positions are not as available as entry-level positions.

Earnings

Earnings are the approximate salaries for various careers. Salaries range from minimum wage for entry-level fast-food jobs to six-figure incomes for some top chefs, restaurant managers, and owners. Benefits are included with the salary.

Related Occupations

Related occupations are jobs that have some of the same working conditions or required skills within the same field. A food-service worker often begins at the lowest job, but he or she may continue into restaurant management or ownership.

Summary:



The Internet is a valuable resource with up-to-date information about the various aspects of food industry careers. Once you learn to investigate the potential careers, you can narrow your search to the area that most interests you to conduct further research. Working conditions are the environment and situation where an individual is employed. They include the hours, type of facility, and nature of work. Training is preparation for a certain job. It can be on-the-job training, formal training, or academic. A job outlook shows the current need for certain careers as well as the future outlook, including salary ranges and opportunities for advancement.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. Where can you find information about careers in the food industry?

2. What does the term “working conditions” mean?
3. List three kinds of training for careers in the food industry.
4. What is a job outlook?
5. Give examples of related occupations for a server.

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Once you have identified and researched a food industry career that interests you, interview someone who currently has that type of job. Ask whether that employee can offer any additional insight. Find out what type of education and training was required. Did he or she obtain the current position after years of additional training and advancement, or is it an entry-level job? Ask that person about his or her favorite and least favorite aspects of the job.

Web Links:



Food Industry Jobs

http://www.ehow.com/list_6506605_types-jobs-food-industry.html

Jobs

http://jobsearch.monster.com/illinois+food-services-hospitality_14

Careers in Food

<http://www.careersinfood.com/>