

Alternative Culinary Arts Careers

IF YOU LIKE TO COOK and you are good at writing, you may decide you want to create a blog, write a book, or work for a publication as a food critic. Culinary arts careers do not have to be in a kitchen. So if you have multiple interests, you may determine how to combine them to find the perfect career for you.



Objective:



Identify alternative culinary arts careers.

Key Terms:



dietitians
entrepreneurs
food marketers
food processors

food scientists
food service managers
food service trainers
food stylists

food writers
menu developers
recipe developers

Understanding Alternative Culinary Arts Careers

Earning a degree in culinary arts does not necessarily mean you must work in a kitchen. With such a degree, you may pursue additional education or work experience to move to a different area that utilizes culinary arts knowledge. You may choose to become a food scientist, food stylist, teacher, food writer, food processor, food marketer, menu developer, recipe developer, food service trainer, entrepreneur, equipment sales representative, dietician, or food service manager.

FOOD SCIENTISTS

Food scientists are people who study the principles of food processing and deterioration. Typically, these people spend a lot of their time at work conducting research. As a result, many

of these positions require a doctorate in chemistry, microbiology, or a related area. Food scientists determine the nutritional levels in the foods people consume. Some jobs focus on researching new food sources. Other positions work on improving the safety, palatability, and healthfulness of processed foods. Food scientists suggest the best ways to process, package, preserve, store, and distribute food by using their knowledge of chemistry, engineering, microbiology, and other sciences.



FIGURE 1. A food scientist will determine whether genetically modified food is safe.

FOOD STYLISTS

Food stylists are people who market food by arranging items in a manner that will photograph well for commercials, magazines, and videos. They must be extremely detail oriented in their approach to displaying the food. In addition, they must listen closely to photographers and videographers regarding their needs and wants about lighting and other instrumental factors. Food stylists may work for places such as *Food & Wine* and *Cooking Light*. They might also find employment on The Food Network. Although this job may not require a college degree, courses in culinary arts and photography can be instrumental in this career path.

TEACHERS

Teachers are people who instruct students in culinary arts programs. For their jobs, they must have a broad knowledge of the industry and the ability to use plain language (rather than jargon) to share information and techniques with their students. They may teach in high schools, community colleges, or culinary arts schools (e.g., Le Cordon Bleu, The Art Institutes, Kendall College, and L'École Culinaire). Depending on the institution, a teacher may require an associate's degree in culinary arts as well as a bachelor's degree in nutrition, hospitality, lodging, or some other related field. In addition, most educational facilities seek instructors with both hands-on experience and teaching experience.

FOOD WRITERS

Food writers are people who may create their own blogs, how-to books, or recipe books. These writers may also find positions as restaurant reviewers for local or national publications.

Food writers must also excel at grammar and writing. They may need knowledge of various software programs if writing is for online publications. Food writers must be aware of what has been published and must be on top of what is new and/or trendy in the industry. A bachelor's degree in English, journalism, or mass communications in addition to a culinary arts degree or certificate would prepare someone for this career.

FOOD PROCESSORS

Food processors are people who transform raw ingredients into food for human consumption. Food processors may work, for instance, in harvesting facilities or in butcher shops. Food can be produced in a variety of ways, including the following four food production methods:

- ◆ One-off production is a method used when customers place orders for specialized products (e.g., birthday and wedding cakes).
- ◆ Batch production is a method used when the market size for a product is not known and where a range of products exists. For example, a local bakery may prepare cinnamon rolls and chocolate-chip cookies via batch production.
- ◆ Mass production is a method used when a demand exists for a large number of identical products (e.g., candy bars, frozen dinners, and canned food). A mass-produced product passes from one production stage to another along a production line.
- ◆ Just-in-time production is a method used in sandwich establishments (e.g., Subway). The components are displayed, and the customers choose what they want. The products are prepared in front of the customers.



FIGURE 2. Processing is one step in moving food from farmers to consumers.

FOOD MARKETERS

Food marketers are people who may create and/or advertise new products. The bulk of food marketers work with processed food. These people normally need a bachelor's or master's degree in advertising, marketing, or a related field. They should also have knowledge of design and photography principles as well as a good grasp of the English language.

MENU DEVELOPERS

Menu developers are people who create a list of edible selections for diners. They typically find jobs working for corporations that own restaurant chains. However, menu developers may also work for places such as school districts, hospitals, nursing homes, and weight management programs (e.g., Weight Watchers and Jenny Craig). Depending on the establishment for which a menu is being created, a menu developer may focus on one or more of the following: local fare, reduced use or elimination of animal protein, seafood incorporation, low-fat items, reduced-sodium selections, and low-calorie options.

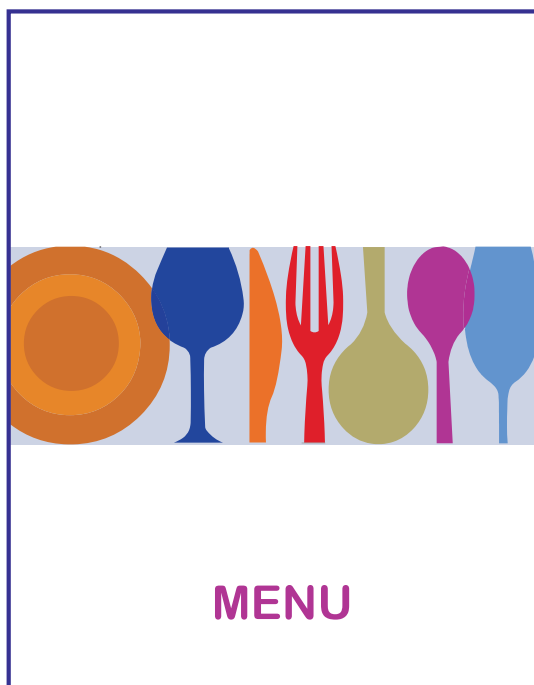


FIGURE 3. Menu developers may work for corporations, school districts, hospitals, nursing homes, and weight management programs.

RECIPE DEVELOPERS

Recipe developers are people who work with ingredients to determine the right amounts for the desired taste, texture, and appearance of certain items. These people are often employed by test kitchens for major processed food companies (e.g., Kraft, General Mills, ConAgra, and Nabisco). Recipe developers may also work for restaurant chains and weight loss systems, such as Weight Watchers and Jenny Craig.

FOOD SERVICE TRAINERS

Food service trainers are people who provide specific training to food industry employees in areas such as food preparation, food safety, and hygiene requirements. Typically, these individuals are in management (e.g., managers, assistant managers, sous-chefs, and chefs). However, some trainers act as consultants for hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and other institutions. In addition, trainers may travel to new locations of franchises to train new employees. Being a good communicator and presenter as well as a leader who is clear and confident with an approachable personality will help in this role.

ENTREPRENEURS

Entrepreneurs are people who develop, organize, operate, and manage businesses. Generally, entrepreneurs must be risk takers with much initiative. Although they are in charge of their own hours, they may work more than 40 hours per week because of their personal investment in their businesses. The work, however, may be more rewarding if an owner is

pursuing his or her lifelong ambition. Although no specific level of education is required to follow this path, it is best to have experience handling money, to have knowledge of marketing, to be a well-organized planner, and to have a business plan in place before walking down this path. Taking culinary arts, business, marketing, advertising, human resources, accounting, and communications classes can assist in this area.

EQUIPMENT SALES REPRESENTATIVES

Equipment sales representatives are people who meet with restaurant or other food-service establishment managers or owners to discuss their needs and to provide information regarding available options. These people may work in a company store, an equipment showroom, or as on-the-road salespeople. In addition to a culinary arts background, it is important for these people to have excellent communication skills and to be persuasive. Taking culinary arts, speech, psychology, and business classes in high school will be useful.



FIGURE 4. Equipment sales representatives must have excellent communication skills and must be persuasive.

DIETICIANS

Dieticians are people who plan nutritional programs to promote healthy choices and, therefore, minimize diseases related to poor nutrition. They may work with cafeteria chefs, doctors who have patients with dietary restrictions, and patients in weight loss management programs. Dieticians must possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree in foods and nutrition, dietetics, food service systems management, or a related field. Interested high school students should take courses in math, nutrition, chemistry, biology, and communications.

FOOD SERVICE MANAGERS

Food service managers are people who hire employees, prepare for service, assign tasks to kitchen and dining employees, and coordinate various tasks for successful food and beverage service. Generally, these people have years of experience in food service before entering the managerial ranks. Such positions may also require culinary arts and business classes and often an undergraduate degree in food, hospitality, and/or lodging services.

Summary:



Earning a degree in culinary arts does not necessarily mean you must work in a kitchen. With such a degree, you may pursue additional education or work experience to move to a different area that utilizes culinary arts knowledge. Opportunities exist for food scientists, food stylists, teachers, food writers, food processors, food marketers, menu developers, recipe developers, food service trainers, entrepreneurs, equipment sales representatives, dietitians, and food service managers.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What is a food scientist, and how much education is needed for such a position?
2. What is the role of a food processor?
3. Where can recipe developers find employment?
4. What is the role of a dietitian?
5. What are three roles of a food service manager?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Out of the careers mentioned, select a specific one that is of interest to you, and research it thoroughly. Determine the salary range, the educational requirements, and some of the places where you could work in that career.

Web Links:



Food Stylist

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtH9YulPwmE>

Food Industry

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_industry

Food Scientists and Technologists

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5LSMVS6HXg>

Jobs for Chef School Graduates

<http://www.allculinaryschools.com/culinary-careers/guide/culinary-arts/jobs-for-chef-school-grads>