

What does it mean to be a CHEF?

Eating is one of life's greatest pleasures so as a chef you can be responsible for spreading joy to many people. They are skilled and hardworking people with a flair for the culinary arts.

The Key Facts

- ◆ Last year there were 4,502,775 tourists who visited Cambodia- that's 4,502,775 mouths who are excited to try a taste of the delicious Khmer cuisine, as well as their favorite western foods.
- ◆ Most chefs study at culinary school before they start working. They can specialize in different types of food, different cuisines, and different styles of cooking (expensive restaurants, mass catering).
- ◆ If you are interested in becoming a chef you could do some research about the Cambodia Chef's Association. You could contact them directly to gain information about studying and work experience.

Training

Becoming a chef usually involves a combination of formal education and on-the-job training. There are two levels of professional training programs: vocational and trade schools, and culinary school degree programs. Vocational or trade schools typically offer courses in basic cooking methods, baking, food handling and more. These programs can last for several weeks to a year, or longer, and usually award certificates of completion.

At the beginning of your career the work may be very difficult, with uncommon hours, such as night shifts, weekends and public holidays.

During an apprenticeship you will be guided and assisted in order to develop your culinary skills.

What does the job involve?

Chefs prepare, cook and present food. A chef can also be very innovative with food, creating new dishes and putting together an exciting menu. They must also keep track of cooking supplies, stock levels, maintain a clean kitchen and perform other managerial duties, too.

In the kitchen, it is important to be able to work as part of a team. People are relying on you to do your job perfectly. If you are a head chef, you will need to be able to manage your team and organise your staff in order to make the kitchen function as efficiently as possible. If you run your own restaurant, you will need to manage the business side of things, as well.



Specialising

Chefs may find that they have a particular gift for a certain style of cooking, whether it's patisserie, seafood or a specific cuisine. They may travel to other countries to specialise in their chosen style.

Working Under Pressure

A key aspect of being a chef is being able to remain calm and focused when you are working, and this is a skill which you will have to master over the years.

The Hours

The hours are different to most jobs, and chefs often have to work long shifts in the evening and at weekends. This can make it difficult to spend time with your other friends.

Travelling

A chef's knowledge of food can be widely enriched by travelling. This will help them to experience new ingredients, recipes and techniques.



The Disadvantages

- ◆ The hours are very inconvenient.
- ◆ The work itself is more tiring than most other jobs, and even after you have finished cooking you will need to spend a few hours cleaning the kitchen.
- ◆ Sometimes tempers can be short in the heat of the kitchen and people end up having arguments because of the stress.
- ◆ It is very important not to make mistakes.
- ◆ The time pressure means that the work is very stressful.

The Advantages

- ◆ You will be able to make delicious food to share with your family and friends.
- ◆ There is a huge variety of work environments available for chefs, for example high-end restaurants, cruise ships and individual clients. The best chefs are sometimes booked by celebrities to cook for them.
- ◆ Being a chef provides a big opportunity to travel, whether you want to visit other countries to discover their cuisine, work in worldwide restaurants or even study at cooking school abroad.
- ◆ It is a creative job which means it is not boring.
- ◆ You can make people very happy.

