

Summer

Lesson

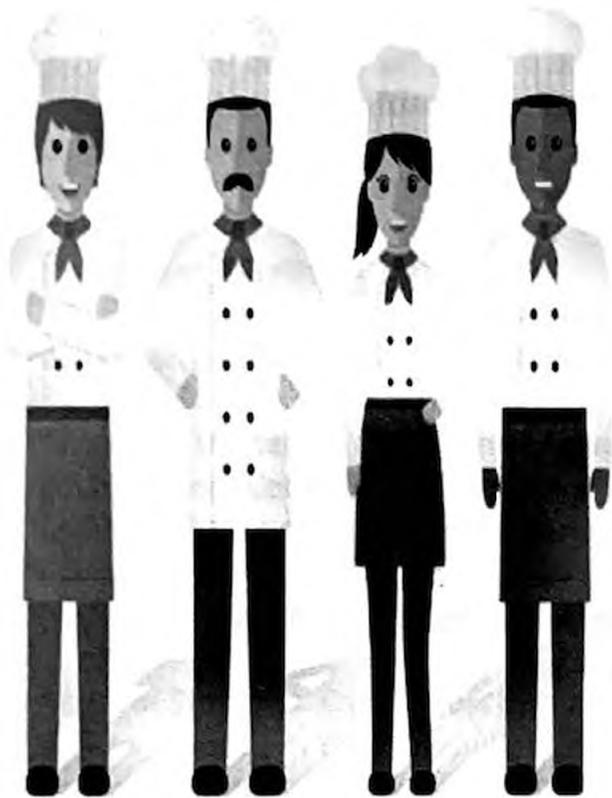
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COOKS

Career Exploration

What Cooks Do

There are several different types of cooks. The common types of cooks are fry cooks, grill cooks, line cooks, fast-food cooks, short-order cooks, and personal cooks. Cooks are sometimes referred to as chefs. Technically, chefs are cooks that have a professional degree or certificate. The responsibilities of cooks vary depending on the type of restaurant, the size of the restaurant, and the level of service offered. The main duty of most cooks is to prepare and cook foods. Other duties that cooks have are to weigh, measure, mix, and cut different ingredients for a wide range of dishes. They utilize different cooking methods such as grilling, broiling, roasting, frying, and steaming. Cooks arrange and garnish plates. They are also responsible for keeping their work area clean and handling food safely.



Work Environment

Most cooks work in restaurants. However, they also may work in hotels, hospitals, or private homes. Cooks do have to stand for long periods of time. The job can be stressful because of the fast pace environment. During busy dining times, they must prepare many dishes quickly. Kitchens are usually crowded and filled with potential dangers. Sharp knives, hot ovens, open flames, and boiling oils are just a few of the dangers that cooks must deal with daily. Because of these dangers, cooks have one of the highest rates of injuries and illnesses of all occupations.

Answer each question with a complete sentence on a separate piece of paper.

1. What are four common types of cooks?
2. What are cooks sometime referred to as?
3. What is the main duty of a cook?
4. What four duties does a cook perform?
5. Where are three different places a cook may work?
6. Why can cooking be a stressful profession?
7. What do cooks have one of the highest rates of?

How to Become a Cook

No formal education is required to become a cook. The most common way people become cooks is through on-the-job training or work-related experience. However, many restaurants do require or prefer cooks to have a certificate in culinary arts or a related field. There are many vocational cooking schools, professional culinary art institutes, and public college programs. Most programs are one or two years long. Earning a culinary certification allows for more job opportunities. Some cooks learn through an apprenticeship program. Typical apprenticeships last one year and combine training and work experience.

Important Qualities

The following are important qualities that are helpful in being successful as a cook.

Dexterity: Dexterity is having hand-eye coordination. Cooks use many tools and techniques that require good dexterity. For example, they must use proper knife techniques for cutting, chopping, and dicing.

Physical Stamina: Cooks must be able to work for long periods of time on their feet without becoming tired.

Sense of Taste and Smell: Cooks need to be able to easily distinguish between specific flavors and smells.

Teamwork Skills: Preparing meals and serving them require the entire restaurant staff to work together as a team.



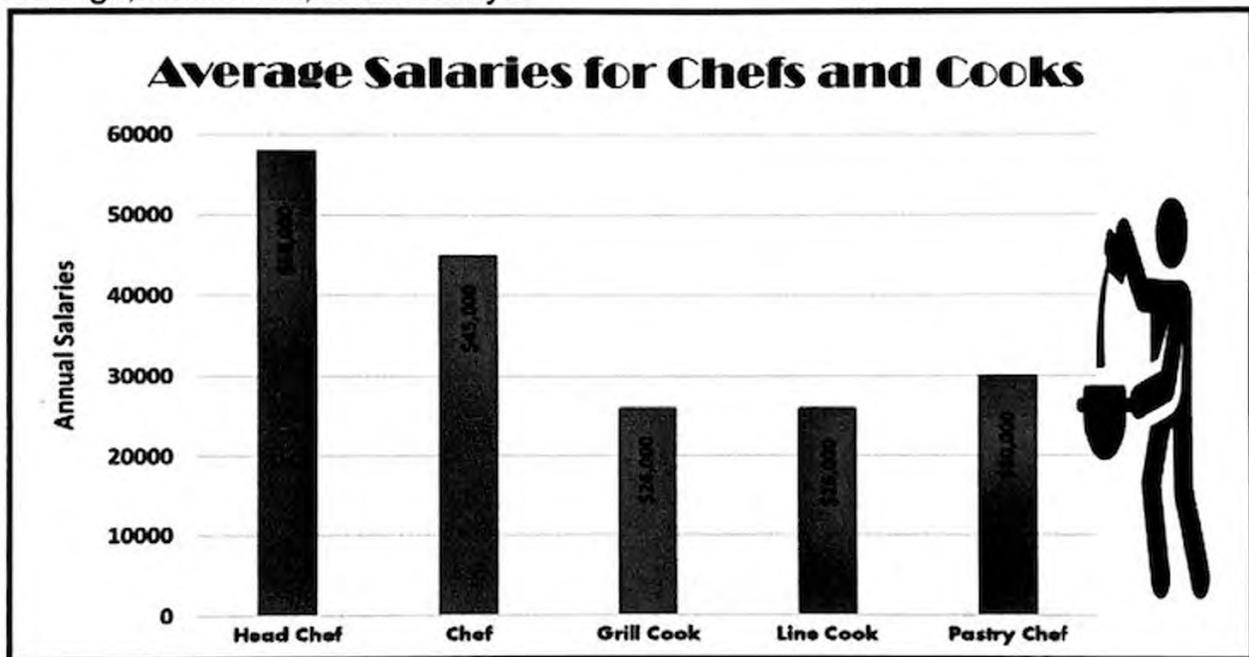
Answer each question with a complete sentence on a separate piece of paper.

8. What is the most common reason why people become cooks?
9. What do many restaurants require or prefer cooks to have?
10. What does earning a culinary certificate allow for?
11. How long do most apprenticeships last?
12. What would be three qualities that are important to be a successful cook?
13. Why do you think it would be important for a cook to have good dexterity?
14. Why are teamwork skills important for a cook to have?

Source: 2018, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook.

Pay and Work Schedule

The average wage for cooks is about \$12.50 an hour or about \$26,000 annually. Earnings for cooks do vary depending on the type of restaurant and region. Fine dining restaurants and luxury hotels often pay their cooks more than the average wage. However, these restaurants also often require cooks to have culinary certificates. The top 10 percent of cooks earn about \$21.00 an hour or \$45,000 annually. Most cooks work full time. Work shifts can include early mornings, late evenings, weekends, and holidays.



Job Outlook

Employment of cooks is projected to be about average compared to all other occupations. It is estimated to grow about 6 percent over the next decade, with growth rates varying greatly depending on the specialty. The trend of people eating out continues to grow. Job prospects should be strong as a result of this trend as well as need to replace a large number of cooks who are leaving the occupation. Those with formal training will have the best prospects of finding a job.

Answer each question with a complete sentence on a separate piece of paper.

15. What is the average wage for cooks?
16. Where can cooks earn a higher wage than average?
17. How much do the top ten percent of cooks earn?
18. How fast is this occupation expected to grow?
19. What two reasons are responsible for strong job prospects for cooks?
20. What types of cooks will have the best job prospects?

1. Do you think this would be a good career choice for you? Please explain, why or why not?