**History of Chef**

Chef is an open-source systems management and cloud infrastructure automation framework created by Opscode.

Opscode is the leader in cloud infrastructure automation. We help companies of all sizes develop fully automated server infrastructures .

[**DevOps**](http://searchcloudcomputing.techtarget.com/definition/DevOp) **can use Chef to deploy and manage servers and applications in-house and in the cloud.** Opscode cookbooks are available on the Chef site's [wiki](http://searchsoa.techtarget.com/definition/wiki)-style [community pages](http://wiki.opscode.com/display/chef/How+to+Contribute) and on [GitHub](http://searchdatacenter.techtarget.com/definition/GitHub).

**Chef** is an American corporation headquartered in [Seattle, Washington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seattle,_Washington), which produces software allowing information technology departments to automate the process in which they configure, deploy and scale servers and applications.

The company was founded **as Opscode in 2008** by current Chief Technology Officer **Adam Jacob,** [**Jesse Robbins**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesse_Robbins)**, Barry Steinglass, and Nathan Haneysmith**.

Chef is based in Seattle, with regional offices in [Atlanta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlanta), [North Carolina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Carolina), [London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London), and [Silicon Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silicon_Valley).

Chef is a [venture funded](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venture_capital) company, as of Sep 2015 Chef is valued at $360 million after a $40 million funding round.

About 70% of Chef’s clients come from Fortune 1000 companies, including major organizations like [Facebook](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook), [Nordstrom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nordstrom), [Disney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disney), and [General Electric](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Electric).

The [Chef software](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chef_%28software%29) is used to streamline the task of configuring & maintaining a company's servers, and can integrate with [cloud-based](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_computing) platforms such as [Rackspace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rackspace) and [Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Elastic_Compute_Cloud) to automatically provision and configure new machines.

**Licensing**

Chef offers three versions of its product: Chef Basics (free, open source), Hosted Chef ($72/node, minimum 20 node purchase), and Chef Automate ($137/node, annual subscription). The paid versions offer varying degrees of free trial and a range of features and support benefits

**Opscode** did a complete overhaul of Chef's underlying [code](http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/code)  for Chef version 11, swapping out Apache CouchDB for the [PostgreSQL](http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/PostgreSQL) relational database and the [Ruby](http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Ruby) programming language for [Erlang](http://searchnetworking.techtarget.com/definition/erlang). The result is beefed-up [scalability](http://searchdatacenter.techtarget.com/definition/scalability) in which a single Chef server can be used to configure more than 10,000 [nodes](http://searchnetworking.techtarget.com/definition/node).

Chef is available in three different versions:

* Private chef -  an enterprise version which supports [multi-tenancy](http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/multi-tenancy) and runs in-house behind a [firewall](http://searchsecurity.techtarget.com/definition/firewall).
* Hosted Chef - a [SaaS](http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/SaaS) managed cloud service hosted by Opscode.
* open source Chef - a free download that requires that each instance of Chef to be configured and managed locally.

Cookbooks and recipes tell Chef how each node in an organization should be configured. Opscode recipes describe the state a resource should be in at any given time. Chef stores these files in cookbooks along with other necessary configuration files.  The chef [client](http://searchenterprisedesktop.techtarget.com/definition/client), which is installed on every node, does the actual configuration