

Title:

Are You Professional Chef Material?

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466

Summary:

Do you dream about the glory of becoming a professional chef? Can you really do it? Are you professional chef material? Find out!

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We see them on the Food Network every day. Rachael, Paula, Emeril and others zip around their kitchens making quick work of fabulous recipes. In no time, they've whipped up three or four dishes that look so appetizing you can almost smell them through the TV. As thoughts like "I can do that" ramble around in your mind, you begin dreaming about the glory of becoming a professional chef. Can you do it? Are you professional chef material?

Like all great things, obtaining the title of chef takes time. Both formal training and hands-on experience need time to cultivate in order to bring your skills to the level of a professional. That means culinary school and an apprenticeship or externship may be necessary as part of your training.

<B>Characteristics of Great Chefs</B>

Some of the best chefs are found in Hollywood, California. Culinary arts school instructors in this area of the country are quick to tell would-be chefs what characteristics play a vital role in their quests for professional status. From personal observations of those in California who have attended a cooking school and reached the level of Executive Chef or Master Chef, the first two traits that stand out are hard work and creativity.

Becoming a chef will require dedication to the time and tasks of completing culinary school, working through an externship and gaining years of experience through frontline work in restaurants. As you build your cooking and baking skills, you'll incorporate the physical tasks of chopping, slicing, mixing and

others into the creative tasks of developing recipes and plating your dishes with unique presentations. The end result is a multisensory experience of sight, smell and taste that truly brings pleasure to those who eat what you've prepared.

What else is required? The ability to work as part of a team. Yes, even though Rachael and Emeril appear to be going it alone on their shows, they have an entire staff behind the scenes that assists them. A professional chef must be able to delegate responsibilities, supervise the work of others, coordinate every step of the menu and culminate the efforts of everyone involved into wonderful dishes that are served hot, fresh and on time.

A love for food is also needed to be a great chef. Do you wonder about how different seasonings and textures work together? Are you always experimenting to find new combinations of spices, herbs and sauces that bring out the flavor of your dishes? This curiosity and love of food will certainly work in your favor as you strive toward your goal.

Do you possess some or all of these characteristics? Then who knows . . . with the proper training and experience you could one day own your own restaurant or be the next up-and-coming star!