



Prepare Food

# Cook

## What do cooks do?

Cooks prepare food. They work in restaurants, hotels, hospitals, schools and other places.

## Meet a cook

Sam is a cook. He works in a hospital kitchen.

Here are things that Sam does:

- He helps to plan menus. He makes lists.
- He washes, peels and cuts vegetables.
- He cuts up meat and fish.
- He makes soups, salads and sauces. He also makes desserts.
- He divides food into servings.
- He makes food for **patients** on special diets.
- He gives **instructions** to kitchen helpers.

Sam's food has to taste good and look good.

### tip

Do you see words in **bold**?  
 You can look up these words at  
[alis.alberta.ca/ERdictionary](http://alis.alberta.ca/ERdictionary).





## What is Sam's work like?

Sam works an 8-hour **shift** on weekdays. Sometimes he works on weekends and holidays.

The hospital kitchen is noisy. Sometimes it gets very warm. Sam wears a uniform and a hairnet.

Sometimes Sam has to work quickly. He has to be careful. He works with sharp knives. He works at a hot stove. He doesn't want to cut himself or burn himself.

Sometimes Sam has to lift and move heavy things. These things can weigh over 25 kilograms (over 55 pounds).

## Do you want to be a cook?

- You must be healthy.
- You have to stand for many hours.
- You must be clean.
- You have to like making food.
- You must have a good sense of taste and smell.
- You have to keep the kitchen clean and tidy.
- You need to read and write English. For example, you have to read recipes and menus. You may have to write down instructions and make lists.
- You must work well with a team.
- You need to be creative. For example, Sam can prepare potatoes in many ways.



## What education do cooks need?

- Some people start as kitchen helpers. They learn about cooking on the job. They don't need a high school **diploma**. Later they may become cooks.
- Some people take cooking courses. They may get a **certificate** or diploma in cooking.
- Cooks can take an **apprenticeship**. They learn on the job and take courses at a **post-secondary school**. After 3 years, they can become a **journeyperson** cook.

You can ask your **career advisor** or tutor about working as a cook. You can ask about training, too.



## What can cooks do in the future?

Cooks can work in many places. For example, fast food restaurants, cafeterias or camps. Some jobs are seasonal. For example, cooks at golf courses may only work in the spring, summer and fall.

Cooks with **experience** may change jobs. They can work in different restaurants. Some cooks may become chefs. Chefs take special training. They are often **supervisors** of other cooks and kitchen helpers in fancy restaurants.

Some cooks may become **caterers**. Caterers often have their own business.

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### How much does a cook make?

A cook usually makes between \$15.00 and \$18.89 per hour.

## Other jobs to think about

**Bakers** work in bakeries, grocery stores and other places. Bakers make different kinds of baked goods. For example, breads, cakes, cookies and pies.

**Caterers** make food for parties, meetings and other events. They take the food to customers' homes and businesses. Caterers often have their own business.

**Meat cutters** cut meat and fish. They prepare sausages and other meat products. They work in meat **processing plants**, meat shops and grocery stores.

## Do you want more information?

You can find the information below at [alis.alberta.ca/occinfo](http://alis.alberta.ca/occinfo). Or you can ask your career advisor or tutor.

- OCCinfo profile: Cook
- Videos: Cook, Meat Cutter
- Easy Reading Dictionary

You can also ask your career advisor or tutor about jobs that are like Cook.

