

Cook

Get hired in a week with no schooling, learn a trade on the line, and take the skill anywhere in the country.

TYPICAL PAY

\$37,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$31k to \$52k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Restaurants, hotels, work camps, hospitals and schools

How you get there

- 1 Get a food handler certificate** 1 day
 A short online course your local public health unit recognises. Most kitchens want it before your first shift.
- 2 Get hired** Days to weeks
 Dishwasher or prep cook. Walk in with a resume in the afternoon between lunch and dinner service. Many cooks started at 16.
- 3 Learn the stations** 1 to 3 years
 Salad, grill, saute, then working the pass. This is the real training and it happens on shift.
- 4 Apprentice or take a diploma** 1 to 3 years
 Optional. A cook apprenticeship pays you while you work and sends you to school in blocks. A college diploma runs 1 to 2 years.
- 5 Red Seal Cook** About 3 years
 Pass the interprovincial exam. In Ontario the apprenticeship is 6,000 hours: 5,280 on the job plus 720 in school.

Pros and cons

- + No debt, no waiting, hired in days
- + Paid to learn a real craft
- + Cooks are needed in every town and every country
- Pay stays low for the first few years
- Nights, weekends and every holiday
- Burns, cuts and ten hours on your feet

Good to know

Cook is a Red Seal trade

The same national program that covers electricians and welders covers cooks, and it is designated in all thirteen provinces and territories. A Red Seal cook can move province to province without w...

The North pays the most

Job Bank puts the median cook wage in Yukon at about \$28 an hour, well above the national median of \$18. Remote kitchens are hard to staff, so they pay more and often throw in housing.

Optional boosts

Red Seal Cook certificate. Butchery and charcuterie skills. Baking and pastry. Camp and remote work.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Cook in Canada, wages (updated Nov 19, 2025)

Red Seal Program: Cook

Skilled Trades Ontario: Cook

Ontario: minimum wage

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/cook>



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