



Job Situation

busy kitchen in elegant family restaurant. Teamwork. Reporting to Cook. Shiftwork.

Weekly Hours of Work

40

Overtime

Monthly Salary

\$2,800

Student Loan – Owning

Student Loan – Monthly Payment

Duties

Clean vegetables and other foods. Maintain cleanliness and order in kitchen and food storage areas. Perform simple cooking and food preparation as directed by cook.

Prospects

Cook. Chef. Production worker in food processing.

Job Title

Cook's Helper

National Occupational Classification (NOC)

9617

Job Description

Cook's helpers on day shift arrive a couple of hours before the first meal is served and join forces with the dishwasher to dig the kitchen out from the night before. Every surface must be clean and tidy, garbage removed, and vegetable cleaning well underway when the cook arrives. Then you do whatever the cook asks. If it's a messy or a time consuming job, it's probably yours. The kitchen is a bit hot, sometimes noisy, and always busy. It can be tiring work but you are in good shape and always keep going no matter how sleepy you feel.

A good helper learns the cook's style and the recipes used in making regular menu items. You soon learn to have the knife or the whisk or the pepper ready to hand without being asked. The cook you are assisting is always impressed with your ability to plan ahead and have everything ready. As you become more experienced the cook will rely on you more and teach you new things.

For someone who loves to cook, this is as exciting as learning magic tricks. As in "Ah-Ha!—so that's how they do that— cool!" as a radish becomes a rose with a few deft knife cuts, or a delicate cake is coaxed out of the pan and gently onto a platter without a crumb disturbed. You will learn to sharpen a knife from an expert, so that it can cut paper thin slices of mushroom or beautiful rounds from ripe tomatoes.

If you work the night shift in a busy place, you're walking into full scale production and have to take your bearings quickly as the dayshift helper on the way out tells you what's to be done. Math was never your strong point but it is amazing how much estimating and calculating you have to make. The night shifts can be fun, so busy that time flies, with the servers bringing the kitchen staff funny stories from the dining room as they pick up their orders. The other great thing about the night shift is the morning after—when you can sleep in and go to another restaurant for your early afternoon breakfast.