

# Chefs & Cooks

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



## **Contents**

1. Working as a Chef or Cook .....	2
2. Skills, Education and Experience .....	10
3. Finding Jobs.....	12
4. Applying for a Job.....	15
5. Getting Help from Industry Sources .....	16

## **1. Working as a Chef or Cook**

### ***Job Description***

Chefs can hold a variety of titles including executive chef, sous-chef, speciality chef.

Working as an **Executive chef** you will perform some or all of the following duties:

- Manage the kitchen
- Plan menus and ensure food quality standards
- Kitchen equipment purchases and repairs, food ordering, hiring staff
- Supervise activities of sous-chefs, specialist chefs, chefs and cooks
- May prepare food on a regular basis, depending on size of kitchen

Working as a **Sous-chef** you will perform some or all of the following duties:

- Plan menus and order food and kitchen supplies
- Prepare and cook meals or specialty foods.
- Supervise kitchen staff
- Demonstrate new cooking techniques and new equipment to cooking staff

Working as a **Chef and specialist chef** you will perform the following duties:

- Prepare and cook complete meals or specialty foods
- Instruct cooks in preparation, cooking, garnishing and presentation of food
- Create new recipes
- Supervise cooks and other kitchen staff
- May plan menus and order food

Working as a **Cook** you will perform some or all of the following duties:

- Prepare and cook complete meals or dishes as instructed by chef
- Schedule and supervise kitchen helpers
- Maintain inventory and records of food, supplies and equipment
- Keep kitchen and cooking equipment clean
- May hire and train kitchen staff

Source: Chefs, NOC 6321

<http://noc.esdc.gc.ca/English/noc/QuickSearch.aspx?ver=16&val65=6321>

Source: Cooks, NOC 6322

<http://noc.esdc.gc.ca/English/noc/QuickSearch.aspx?ver=16&val65=6322>

## ***Industry Overview***

Chefs and cooks work mainly in the food service industry. Industry sources report that the food services industry is experiencing staff shortages. It is anticipated that the province of BC will require many new workers in this sector over the next decade.

The expanding market for good value and high-quality dining experiences will create demand for a wider range of skills for chefs and cooks. Those who specialize in preparing ethnic cuisine or special dishes may have an advantage over others seeking employment.

Employment may be seasonal, as many jobs are dependent on the tourism industry.

Sources: Work BC, <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>

[Search: Chefs (NOC 6321) and Cooks (NOC 6322)]

AND <https://www.go2hr.ca/>

## **Job Outlook in BC**

### **Chefs (NOC 6321)**

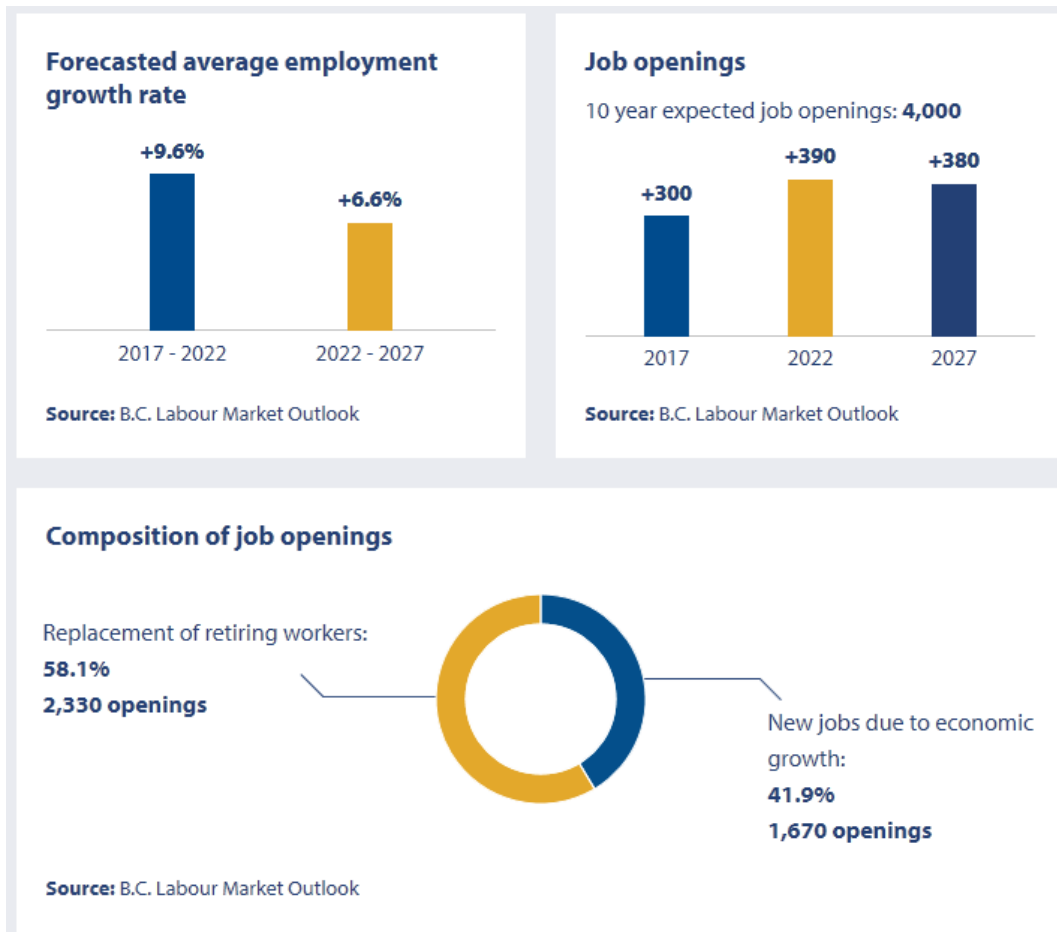


Chart from WorkBC

## Cooks (NOC 6322)

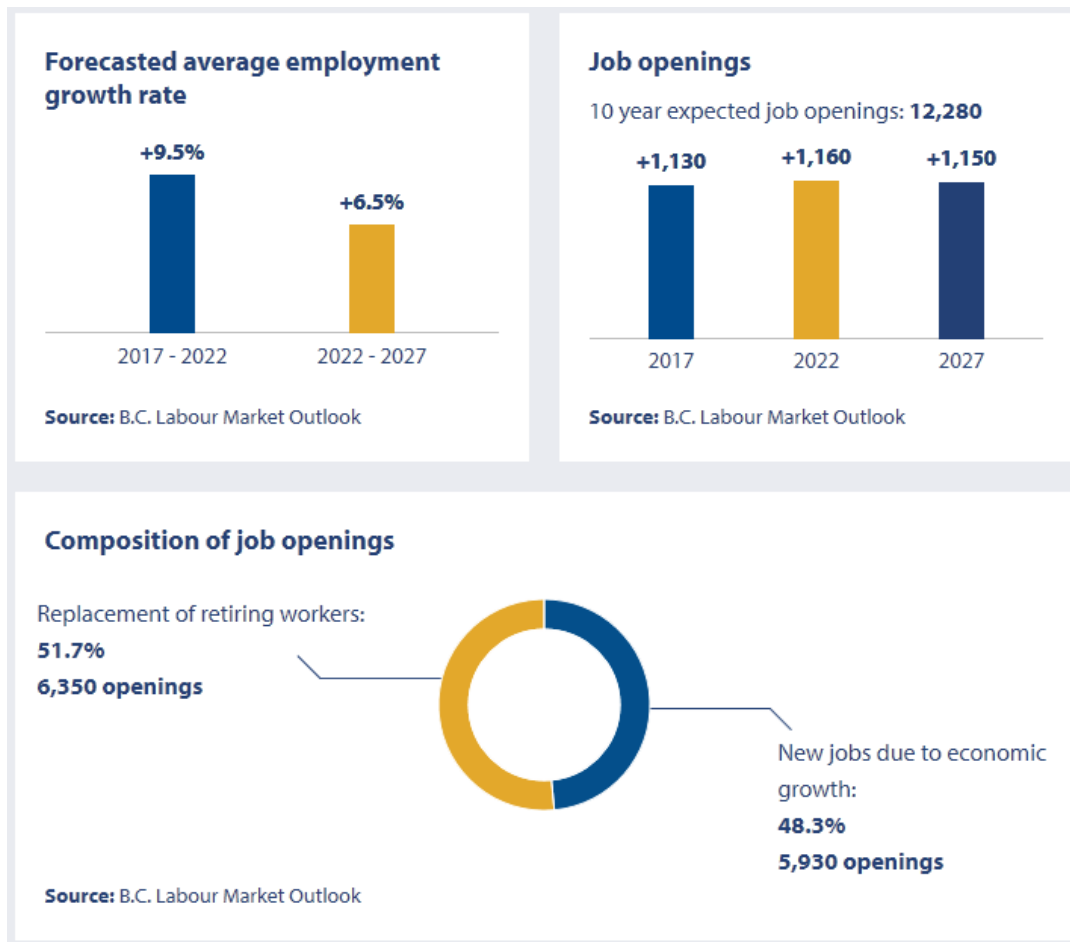


Chart from WorkBC

WorkBC provides job openings in BC regions from 2017-2027:

Region	Employment in 2017	Average Annual Employment Growth	Expected Number of Job Openings
<b>Vancouver Island</b>			
▪ Chefs	1,560	1.5%	610
▪ Cooks	5,700	1.4%	1,750
<b>Lower Mainland / Southwest</b>			
▪ Chefs	6,820	1.6%	2,880
▪ Cooks	20,910	1.6%	7,890
<b>Thompson-Okanagan</b>			
▪ Chefs	890	670	2.2%
▪ Cooks	4,280	1.6%	1,480
<b>Kootenay</b>			
▪ Chefs	190	1.2%	70
▪ Cooks	970	1.6%	340
<b>Cariboo</b>			
▪ Chefs	150	0.9%	50
▪ Cooks	1,250	0.9%	320
<b>North Coast &amp; Nechako</b>			
▪ Chefs	30	1.3%	10
▪ Cooks	690	1.4%	230
<b>Northeast</b>			
▪ Chefs	N/A	N/A	N/A
▪ Cooks	850	1.4%	270

You can learn more about working as a chef or cook in BC from:

- **WorkBC, Career Profiles** <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>  
 Search Chefs (NOC 6321) **OR** Cooks (NOC 6322)
- **Career Cruising**  
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/> [profile for Chef & Cook]  
 Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

## ***Types of Employers***

**Chefs and cooks** are employed by restaurants, cafeterias, hotels and resorts, hospitals, cruise ships, educational institutions, catering companies and a wide range of other establishments.

Source: ***Career Cruising***

## ***Salary***

In BC the median annual salary for **chefs** is \$35,455. The median annual salary for **cooks** is \$27,113.

**Chefs:** The pay for chefs varies a great deal and depends mostly on experience, reputation, and whether you work part-time or full-time. Estimates of Canadian chefs' average income range from about \$23,000 to \$52,000 a year. Entry-level chefs may earn little more than minimum wage, while experienced chefs who work full-time can make up to \$60,000 a year. Experienced chefs, and those who own their own restaurants, can earn more.

**Cooks:** The income for cooks varies widely. Factors affecting earnings include training and experience, employer, geographic location, and whether or not you are unionized. As a union member, you have your wages and benefits negotiated on your behalf by union representatives. Cooks who work in large institutional settings such as hospitals, schools, and colleges are usually unionized.

Sources: Work BC & Career Cruising

In BC regions you can expect to make:

## Chef

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<b><u>British Columbia</u></b>	<b>12.65</b>	<b>17.31</b>	<b>25.96</b>
<u>Kootenay Region</u>	12.65	17.31	25.96
<u>Lower Mainland - Southwest Region</u>	12.65	17.00	24.04
<u>Thompson--Okanagan Region</u>	12.65	17.31	25.96
<u>Vancouver Island and Coast Region</u>	12.65	18.00	35.04

Source: Job Bank Wage Report [http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/wage-outlook\\_search-eng.do?reportOption=wage](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/wage-outlook_search-eng.do?reportOption=wage) [Search 6321]

## Cook

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<b><u>British Columbia</u></b>	<b>12.65</b>	<b>13.75</b>	<b>20.00</b>
<u>Kootenay Region</u>	12.65	13.75	20.00
<u>Lower Mainland - Southwest Region</u>	12.65	14.00	22.00
<u>Nechako Region</u>	12.65	15.00	25.00
<u>North Coast Region</u>	12.65	15.65	29.03
<u>Thompson--Okanagan Region</u>	12.65	13.00	18.00
<u>Vancouver Island and Coast Region</u>	12.65	14.00	20.00

Source: Job Bank Wage Report [http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/wage-outlook\\_search-eng.do?reportOption=wage](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/wage-outlook_search-eng.do?reportOption=wage) [Search 6322]



## ***Working Hours***

Working hours vary depending on the type of establishment. Your work hours may include early mornings, late evenings, holidays and weekends. Work varies between part-time and full-time hours. Chefs and Cooks who work in hospitals, schools, and other such institutions are more likely to have regular working hours. Resorts usually offer seasonal employment only.

**Chefs** may work lunch or dinner shifts, or both. A single shift (either lunch or dinner) may last between 5 and 7 hours, while a double shift (both lunch and dinner) may last 12 hours or more.

**Cooks** work shifts, including evenings, weekends, and holidays. Depending on your place of employment, you may be under a great deal of pressure to produce food quickly. The number of hours worked each week varies widely among cooks. Part-time may be as little as 5 or 6 hours a week, while busy full-time cooks may work up to (and sometimes more than) 50 hours a week.

Sources: Work BC and Career Cruising

## 2. Skills, Education and Experience

### ***Skills for Chefs***

- must be creative and have a good sense of timing
- detail-oriented when it involves food preparation and presentation
- excellent communication, good managerial skills
- ability to motivate staff
- need a great deal of cooperation and teamwork abilities

### ***Skills for Cooks***

- well organized and able to work under pressure
- enjoy working with their hands and have an interest in preparing food
- have strong communication and teamwork skills

### ***Education and Experience***

Chefs and Cooks do not require certification to work in BC but employers tend to prefer hiring those who are certified.

Apprenticeship programs for Professional Cooks are offered through the *BC Industry Training Authority (ITA)*. Graduates of this program can earn the *Red Seal* certification which allows you to work in other provinces without having to re-certify.

**Chefs:** Many colleges and private schools offer programs in food preparation, cooking, chef training, and culinary management. Higher professional certifications are available for those with extensive experience in the field. Professional designations such as these improve a chef's chances of securing better paying positions in fine restaurants and large hotels.

**Cooks:** A high school diploma is often required for this career. To get the higher-skilled and higher paying jobs, you can complete an apprenticeship or attend a college or vocational school where cooking programs are offered.

### ***Qualifications***

***This occupation is not regulated in British Columbia***

However, **voluntary Red Seal** certification is available through the BC Industry Training Authority (ITA)

For more information see:

- **Industry Training Authority**

- <http://www.itabc.ca/program/cook-professional-cook-3>

### **Internationally Trained Chefs and Cooks**

If you have significant work experience in a trade but have never been certified in Canada, you may get credit for your prior training and experience:

- <http://www.itabc.ca/immigrants-trades/credit-prior-learning-and-red-seal-information>

### **3. Finding Jobs**

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, as well as through professional associations' publications.

#### ***Local Newspapers***

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun & The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily and the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in *The Province* on Sundays.

#### ***Job White Pages***

- Available in print at the Central Library or online at  
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/jobfreewaycom>

**NOTE:** *You can only access this database from the Central Library or VPL branch libraries. Access is NOT available from home or outside the Library.*

#### ***Online Job Postings***

- **Go2 Job Board**  
<http://www.go2hr.ca/jobboard.aspx>
- **Hospitality Careers Online**  
<http://www.hcareers.ca/>
- **Indeed.com**  
[http://ca.indeed.com/advanced\\_search](http://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search)  
Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards
- **Raisin Jobs**  
<http://www.raisinfeeds.com/jobs/>

## ***Professional Associations' Career Resources***

- **Canadian Culinary Federation**

[http://ccfcc-jobs.careerwebsite.com/home/index.cfm?site\\_id=13589](http://ccfcc-jobs.careerwebsite.com/home/index.cfm?site_id=13589)

## ***Identifying the Right Position***

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

For **chefs**, look for these related job titles:

- Banquet Chef
- Corporate Chef
- Executive Chef
- Executive Sous-Chef
- Head Chef
- Master Chef
- Sous-Chef
- Specialist Chef
- Supervising Chef

Source: NOC, 6321

For **cooks**, look for these related job titles:

- Apprentice Cook
- Banquet Cook
- Breakfast Cook
- Cafeteria Cook
- Camp Cook
- Caterer Cook
- Hospital Cook
- Licensed Cook
- Pastry Cook
- Pizza Cook
- Restaurant Cook
- Short Order Cook

Source: NOC, 6322

## ***Creating a List of Potential Employers***

You can use directories to produce lists of hotels in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Go2HR Tourism Company Directory**

<https://www.go2hr.ca/companies>

- **The British Columbia Restaurant & Foodservices Association**

<http://bcrfa.memberzone.com/list/>

- **Business in Vancouver – Book of Lists**

Available Central Library, 338.9711 B97b or online at <http://www.biv.com/lists>

- **Tourism BC Accommodation Guide**

<http://www.hellobc.com/british-columbia/accommodations.aspx>

- **Reference Canada**

<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "[*relevant term*]" and click LOOKUP. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

***NOTE:*** You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).

## **4. Applying for a Job**

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume or curriculum vitae and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, <http://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following pathfinders which are available in print at the Central Library or online at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Getting Canadian Work Experience]

- **Networking for Employment**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Networking for Employment]

- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]

## 5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

### *Industry Associations*

Hospitality, tourism, and professional associations in BC and Canada can provide assistance and information on training and certification.

- **The British Columbia Chef's Association**

<http://www.bcchefs.com>

A volunteer association dedicated to the education of both junior members and the upgrading skills of regular members

- **The British Columbia Restaurant & Foodservices Association (BCRFA)**

<http://www.bcrfa.com/>

BCRFA is the advocate for the restaurant and foodservice industry. The BCRFA represents more than 3,000 restaurant and foodservice businesses across BC.

- **Canadian Culinary Federation (CCFCC)**

<http://www.ccfcc.ca>

Canada's national association for chefs and cooks. See links to culinary training programs and other culinary associations.

- **Go2HR**

<https://www.go2hr.ca/>

Provides programs and services for BC's hospitality industries

- **Restaurants Canada**

<https://www.restaurantscanada.org/>

A national association representing a community of 30,000+ foodservice professionals



## ***Industry Journals***

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession.

Examples at the Central Library:

- **Foodservice and Hospitality Magazine**  
Available at VPL Central Branch, 647.905 F686 and online  
<https://www.foodserviceandhospitality.com/>
- **Chef's Quarterly** (The British Columbia Chef's Association)  
<http://www.bcchefs.com/chefs-quarterly-magazine>

***Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Library, Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.***

*Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/> .*