

## **A Day in the Life of a Chef**

~ By RICHARD FOSS ~

Adapted from <<http://richardfoss.com/adayinthelife.html>>.

9:30 AM - arrive at the restaurant and check to see that the produce delivery has come in. Run an inventory on everything and check for freshness and quality of the fruit, vegetables, and seafood while you're at it. If something isn't there - or isn't good enough - call the produce company manager, or you could go pick up those items from the central market yourself...

10:15 AM - Start making desserts and any soups or sauces which require long cooking times. If you have a smoker you need to light the fires that will give the perfect taste to that salmon. Other members of the staff should be showing up by now. If somebody doesn't, get on the phone and find out why. Make sure the tables are set. Sign invoices to acknowledge deliveries of fresh napkins and tablecloth, and check to see if the bread delivery has come in right this time.

10:30 AM – The other cooks arrive. You brief them on the specials of the day and start them making sauces, mixing seasonings, and chopping garnish and vegetables.

11:30 AM - The restaurant opens for lunch, a meal most people want to eat in a hurry. You have selected most of the lunch entrees for speed of preparation, but you watch the rhythm of the kitchen with a critical eye. You are trying out a special which will be featured at dinner, and you watch to see if any orders are coming back only partly eaten. You check with the serving staff, watch to see that clean dishes are coming out of the dishwasher fast enough that there is no shortage out front.

2:00 PM - The lunch rush is over, and you and the staff can dine. You prepare a few items you have been thinking of adding to the menu and serve them to the staff along with some of new wines which you are considering ordering for the restaurant. This is your favorite moment of the day, a chance to relax with colleagues, discuss recipes and wines, and rest a while after lunch.

3:00 PM – The other cooks leave for a break. If lunch was unusually large, check produce stocks and order more of anything which seems to be running low. Review any banquet or catering orders and verify that you'll have enough staff for any big parties.

3:30 PM - Your beverage distributor drops in with a scheduled delivery. As he leaves your mail comes in, with invoices, and advertisements. Next, you write up the daily specials menu.

4:30 PM - The other cooks are back, and they check your notes on specials to make sure they understand them. They then start the afternoon round of making sauces, chopping vegetables and garnishes, and starting any roasts which need several hours of slow cooking. You watch, deal with paperwork, and check the reservation book to try and figure out what tonight's rush is going to be like.

6:00 PM - The dinner rush is on, and it will be for at least four hours. You manage the chaos of a kitchen running full speed as best you can. The rhythm of the kitchen is like the heartbeat of a living organism to you, and you can feel any irregularity before you can actually pinpoint its source. Inspect dishes as they leave the kitchen to make sure the portions are correct and the items well arranged, look at the same dishes as they come back to see if everyone is leaving the Swiss chard or cauliflower at the side. Watch for bottlenecks in the operation. Taste, watch, help, commend, and command, like an orchestra conductor in a chef's toque.

10:00 PM - The rush dies down, and coffee is being served in the dining room. The other cooks are cleaning their knives and putting away non-perishable items for tomorrow. You, on the other hand, are reviewing the menu for the next day. You must revise it depending on what is selling. In any free time you go out to the dining room to get a little interaction with your customers.

10:45 PM - Another fourteen-hour day has gone by. A vacuum is running in the dining room, the busboy is mopping the kitchen floor, and you have a last glass of wine and consider the gleaming surfaces and shining tools of your trade in a kitchen which is now silent and still. It is time for home and a little peace and quiet before bed and the whole routine starting again...