

FOOD SERVICE, RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT AND CULINARY ARTS

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It was in the 16th century that François Rabelais created Gargantua, an earthy, gluttonous giant famous for his idleness and for his love of “eating well,” an expression that encompasses the art of receiving guests and preparing a meal for them.

Thus began the expansion of the now flourishing field of gastronomy and restaurant management, with its vast range of skills, services, and activities related to the creation and transformation of food products. France is a center of excellence in this dynamic economic sector—the nation’s fifth-largest employer and the locus of 110,000 new jobs over the last 10 years. The 175,000 firms of France’s restaurant and food service sector generate annual sales of €50 billion.

Subfields : Bar, bakery, catering, delicatessen, fine cuisine, food science, oenology, pastry, viticulture, wine and wine service, winemaking.

Career opportunities : Baker, bartender, butcher, caterer, chef, confectioner, chocolatier, cook, fishmonger, food service technician, manager, pastry chef, sommelier, waiter.

The sector can be broken down into four categories:

- Institutional food service: More than four billion meals are served each year in three sectors: education (primary through tertiary), health and social (hospitals, retirement homes, penal system), and workplace (public and private sectors). All tolled, that comes to about 11 million meals each day.
- Fine restaurants: France is justly proud of its prominence in this area. Fine, or gourmet, restaurants offer customers fine cuisine, distinctive wines, a warm welcome, attentive service, and a comfortable ambiance. A distinguishing feature of fine restaurants is to offer menus that vary in the complexity and price of dishes.
- Fast food: In this category fall restaurants that serve food for on- or off-premise consumption, served in disposable packaging (fries, hamburgers, pizza, sandwiches, desserts). The category also includes ice cream parlors and tea houses.
- Theme restaurants: Establishments in this category are focused on a particular dimension of food, often a cultural one. Recently the theme chains have driven advances in a sector that has experienced major changes. Buffalo Grill, Courtepaille, Léon de Bruxelles, and other chains racked up sales of more than €1.3 billion in 2009.

ORGANIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Many of the degrees used to gain entry to the food service business are earned in vocational schools (lycées professionnels), such as the Lycée Auffray de Versailles (10% international students), the Lycée Hôtelier de Marseille, and the Lycée Paul Augier de Nice. Also popular are cooking schools and specialized institutes, such as the schools affiliated with the Paris chamber of commerce and industry (TECOMAH and the École Supérieure de Cuisine Française–Ferrandi, for example), the Cordon Bleu, the École Supérieure Internationale de Savignac, the Institut Paul Bocuse, the Institut National de la Boulangerie Pâtisserie (national institute of baking and pastry making), and the Institut Univeria de Grenoble.

Vocational secondary education

France’s vocational secondary schools offer programs that train students for work in every aspect of the restaurant and food service business. Based in France, historically a center of excellence in culinary matters, they train students for careers that can be pursued anywhere in the world.

The **Certificat d’Aptitude Professionnelle (CAP)** is a national diploma that marks the first step on the professional ladder. It also caps programs in service fields (restaurant generalist, waiter) and in food preparation (butcher, baker, cook, pastry maker). The degree is offered in 300 schools throughout France.

The **Brevet d’Études Professionnelles (BEP)**, another national diploma, certifies that the graduate is qualified to meet specific professional responsibilities. It also allows the recipient to pursue a professional baccalaureate (see below). Two distinct tracks exist: (i) hotel and restaurant trades and (ii) butchery and delicatessen. The degree is offered in nearly 150 schools throughout France.

The **Mention Complémentaire (MC)** is a diploma indicating that the recipient has obtained a specialized qualification. MC programs are open to holders of a first vocational credential, and sometimes a general credential. The degree can be earned in several service-oriented aspects of the restaurant business (reception coordinator, food preparation, bartending) as well as several culinary aspects (the art of cooking light, specialized baking, restaurant pastry chef, baking and pastry making, wine service).

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The **Baccalauréat Professionnel**, another national diploma, certifies that the graduate is qualified to for highly skilled professional work. The degree is offered in three areas: (i) butchery, delicatessen, and catering; (ii) baking and pastry making; and (iii) restaurant management.

The **Brevet Professionnel (BP)** follows the professional baccalaureate on the degree ladder. It is associated with the creation and transformation of food products: chef, baker, butcher, bartender. Graduates have completed at least 400 hours of training.

Higher education

Programs leading to the **Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS)** are offered in vocational secondary schools. They train students for restaurant careers through programs in two distinct areas: (i) hotel management and marketing, and (ii) culinary arts and restaurant service.

Licence

Ten different licences professionnelles degrees offered in the universities train students for restaurant and food service management in the four food-service fields (institutional food service, fine dining, fast food, and theme chains) through programs that include courses in law, humanities, and social sciences. Some degrees also include courses in economics, engineering, technology, and the sciences.

Master

About ten different professional and research masters in restaurant and hotel law, economics, and management are offered by the universities (through university-based institutes of business administration) and by specialized business schools such as the École Supérieure de Commerce de La Rochelle and the Institut Paul Bocuse, which offer specialized programs that prepare graduates for international careers in hotel and restaurant management.

RESEARCH THEMES

Reflecting the split in restaurant-related activities (food preparation, on the one hand, and service and management, on the other), research in the sector can also be divided into two branches: one related to services and the other to the transformation of food products. Researchers examine human resources management and organizational structures without losing sight of the culinary context.

The Institut Paul Bocuse is a leader in culinary research. In cooperation with the institute of business administration at Université Lyon 3, it formulates responses to social issues related to food. The institute trains young researchers, as well as culinary professionals, hotel and restaurant managers, and agri-food specialists. Its research themes are health, taste, and economy.

French researchers also grapple with more general management problems with potential applications to the restaurant business. France has more than 60 management research departments around the country, and nearly 40 doctoral departments train future management researchers in a variety of centers, most of which are multidisciplinary. Research topics with applications to restaurant and food-service management include finance, production management, human resource management, marketing, accounting, strategy, and information system. Nutrition, diet, food science, and food quality and safety are the focus of another 30 research units in France.

Wine and gastronomy

Wine-related education has a special place in France, as evidenced by the wide variety of programs and their overtly international focus. From the Diplôme d'Université (DU) in wine tasting offered at the Université de Bordeaux to the European master in viticulture and oenology (Montpellier SupAgro), and encompassing professional programs in wine service and a bachelor's degree in wine and spirits sales (Institut Paul Bocuse), France offers a range of programs of different lengths and at different academic levels adapted to the diverse goals of students and professionals over the short, medium, and long terms (1 to 5 years).

Most scientific research in the area is focused on vine genetics and on improving vines to obtain the best possible harvests and wine. Vines and wines are also studied in interdisciplinary courses in the humanities and social sciences that analyze wine laws and regulations; the interaction between European norms, other nations' legislation, and international law; the legal system of designation of origin; and the dynamic phenomenon of a wine's reputation. Research into these and other topics has contributed to UNESCO's classification of France's wine-growing regions as world heritage sites.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Restaurants have a long history and tradition in France as the laboratories and showcases of cuisine. By the Middle Ages, France's great cooks had defined the country's culinary landscape. Taillevent (whose name now graces one of Paris's great restaurants) and Sidoine Benoît, who standardized the recipe for tripe in the style of Caen, are just two of the fathers of French gastronomy. Later, Antoine Parmentier, who promoted the culinary use of the potato and the art of making fine bread; Alexandre Dumas (senior); Antoine Beauvilliers, the inventor of the restaurant and author of *L'Art du Cuisinier* (1814); Auguste Escoffier; and Joseph Favre, author of the *Grand dictionnaire universel de la cuisine* and founder of the French culinary academy, joined the ranks of the propagators of the French art of eating well. When Favre (1849–1903) founded the Académie Culinaire de France in 1883, the new establishment represented the elite of the culinary world. As the world's oldest association of chefs, it now supports those who spread the influence of French cuisine throughout the world—through innovation and change as well as through the propagation of tradition. The academy organizes and participates in competitions, expositions, and conferences in France and abroad.

Today, Alain Ducasse, the Troisgros brothers, Gaston Lenôte, and Joël Robuchon are just a few of the chefs who have exported their French culinary expertise. These and other practitioners of the "taste professions" (chefs, bakers, and pastry makers) have carried abroad the singular French vision of terroir (the distinctive flavors imparted by the soil of particular places), taste, and luxury. Uncounted thousands of foreign students, trained in

France, have returned home to become the nation's unofficial ambassadors.

The competition known as the Meilleur Ouvrier de France is another French particularity that has earned worldwide recognition. The prestigious title of "France's best practitioner" in various fields (baker, hair stylist, jeweler, etc.) is equally respected in professional circles as by the general public. In the culinary world, the title is given in the following specialities: pastry confectionery, charcuterie (pork butchery), butchery, cuisine/restaurant/wine service, baking, chocolate confectionery, cheese/dairy, and fish. International competitions in cooking and pastry making were conceived and are designed and organized by chefs who have won the Meilleur Ouvrier de France award. Award winners sit on the juries of the world's most prestigious international cooking and pastry making competitions, which require months or years of preparation by competitors.

Gastronomic and culinary criticism is another French invention that has gained worldwide recognition. Culinary guides of French origin can be as complex as art criticism or as simple as a descriptive list. In that respect they resemble the restaurants they critique. The names are familiar to millions of travelers: Guide Bottin Gourmand, Guide Hubert, Guide Champéard, Guide Gault-Millau, Guide Rouge (or Guide Michelin). All guides rate the quality of the food served in the establishments they review, and most also rate the quality of service and the ratio of price to quality. Michelin publishes guides to hotels and restaurants in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Ireland, as well as the main cities of Europe. A new guide is devoted to Tokyo, the city with the most Michelin stars (261) in 2010.

Useful Web sites

- Centre de Ressources Nationales en Hôtellerie Restauration (national hotel and restaurant resource center): <http://www.hotelier-restauration.ac-versailles.fr>
- Confédération Nationale de la Boulangerie (national confederation of bakers): <http://www.boulangerie.org>
- Short courses and vocational programs on the site of Ministry of Education: <http://eduscol.education.fr/pid23177/voie-professionnelle.html>
- Journal des Restaurants Hôtels et Cafés: <http://www.lhotelier-restauration.fr/>
- Meilleurs Ouvriers de France (competition to recognize leaders in various trades and professions): <http://www.meilleursouvriersdefrance.info>
- French portal on wine and viticulture: <http://www.viti-net.com>
- Syndicat National de la Restauration Thématique des Chaînes (national restaurant association, theme chains division): <http://www.snrct.fr>
- Union des Métiers et des Industries de l'Hôtellerie (hotel trades and industries federation): <http://www.umih.fr>

A selection of institutes and training centers

- Le Cordon Bleu: <http://www.cordonbleu.edu>
- École Supérieure de Cuisine Française–Ecole Ferrandi: <http://www.egf.ccip.fr>
- École Supérieure Internationale de Savignac: <http://www.ecole-de-savignac.com>
- Institut National de la Boulangerie Pâtisserie: <http://www.inbp.com>
- Institut Paul Bocuse, École de management Hôtellerie, Restauration, Arts culinaires: <http://www.institutpaulbocuse.com>
- Institut Univeria de Grenoble: <http://www.univeria.fr>
- Lycée René Auffray: <http://www.lyc-auffray-clichy.ac-versailles.fr>
- Lycée Paul Augier: <http://www.lycee-paul-augier.com>
- Lycée Hôtelier de Marseille: <http://www.lyc-hotelier.ac-aix-marseille.fr>
- TECOMAH–Paris : <http://www.tecomah.fr>

Keywords

artisanal cuisine – bakery – baking companies – brasserie – bread – bread oven – butcher shops – butchery – cafeteria – candy making – canteen – caterer – charcuterie – cheese making – cheese shop – confectionery – corporate food service – crêperie – dairy – fast-food – fish shop – food – gourmet food store – home delivery – ice cream shop – institutional food service – kitchen equipment – mobile restaurant – pastry – pâtisserie – pizzeria – prepared meals – sandwich shop – school cafeteria – self-service restaurant – sommelier – supplier – sweetshop – theme restaurant – university food service – vegetarian restaurant – wine service – wine