

The lowdown on who's who in a restaurant kitchen

So your friend tells you they just got promoted to sous chef. What exactly does that mean? And, come to think of it, what determines that some cooks are called chefs and some are not? And, who are all those other people in the kitchen?

The classical lineup of workers is where all the titles originally came from, so that's where we'll start. The chef is the person in charge of the kitchen. In large establishments this person is usually called the executive chef. They are responsible for all aspects of food production including menu planning, purchasing, costing and planning work schedules.

The sous chef is directly in charge of production. Because the executive chef's responsibilities require spending a great deal of time in the office, the sous chef takes command of the actual production and the minute-to-minute supervision of the staff.

The station chefs (or chefs de partie) are in charge of particular areas of production. The sauce chef (or saucier) prepares sauces, stews, hot hors d'oeuvres and sautés food to order. The fish cook (or poissonier) prepares fish dishes. The vegetable cook (or entremetier) prepares vegetables, soups, starches and eggs. Large kitchens may divide these duties among the vegetable cook, the fry cook and the soup cook. The roast cook (or rotisseur) prepares roasted and braised meats and their gravies. The pantry chef (or garde manger) is

What's cookin'?

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responsible for cold foods, including salads, dressings, pates, cold hors d'oeuvres and buffet items. The pastry chef (or patissier) prepares pastries and desserts. The relief cook, swing cook (or tournant) replaces other station heads as needed.

Cooks and assistants in each station help with the particular duties that are assigned to them.

Obviously, this arrangement of staff is only necessary in very large kitchen establishments. In most kitchens, two or more of these positions are combined together. For example, the chef may be a working chef rather than an executive chef and he or she may be in charge of the kitchen as well as working one or more of the station positions. A second cook may combine the duties of the sauce cook, fish cook and vegetable cook.

In many smaller operations, the short-order cook is the backbone of the kitchen. This cook may handle the broiler, deep fryer, griddle, sandwich production and maybe even some sautéed items. In other words, the short-order cook's responsibility is the

preparation of foods that can be quickly prepared to order.

The most often misunderstood title is that of chef. Often, anyone with a white jacket is referred to as a chef. Classically speaking, the name chef is reserved for those who are in charge of the kitchen since the word chef in French means chief or head. However, it is sometimes used now to identify those that have been the head of a kitchen in the past, but are not currently in that role. And it is also sometimes used to identify levels of

education. For example if the cook has his/her papers or his/her red-seal he/she is also sometimes referred to as chef. Then there are those who are Chef de Cuisine this is reserved for an elite group of chefs who have undergone rigorous studying and exams with the Escoffier Society to end up with this designation. If in doubt as to how to address someone wearing whites, just ask!

Have fun and keep cooking!

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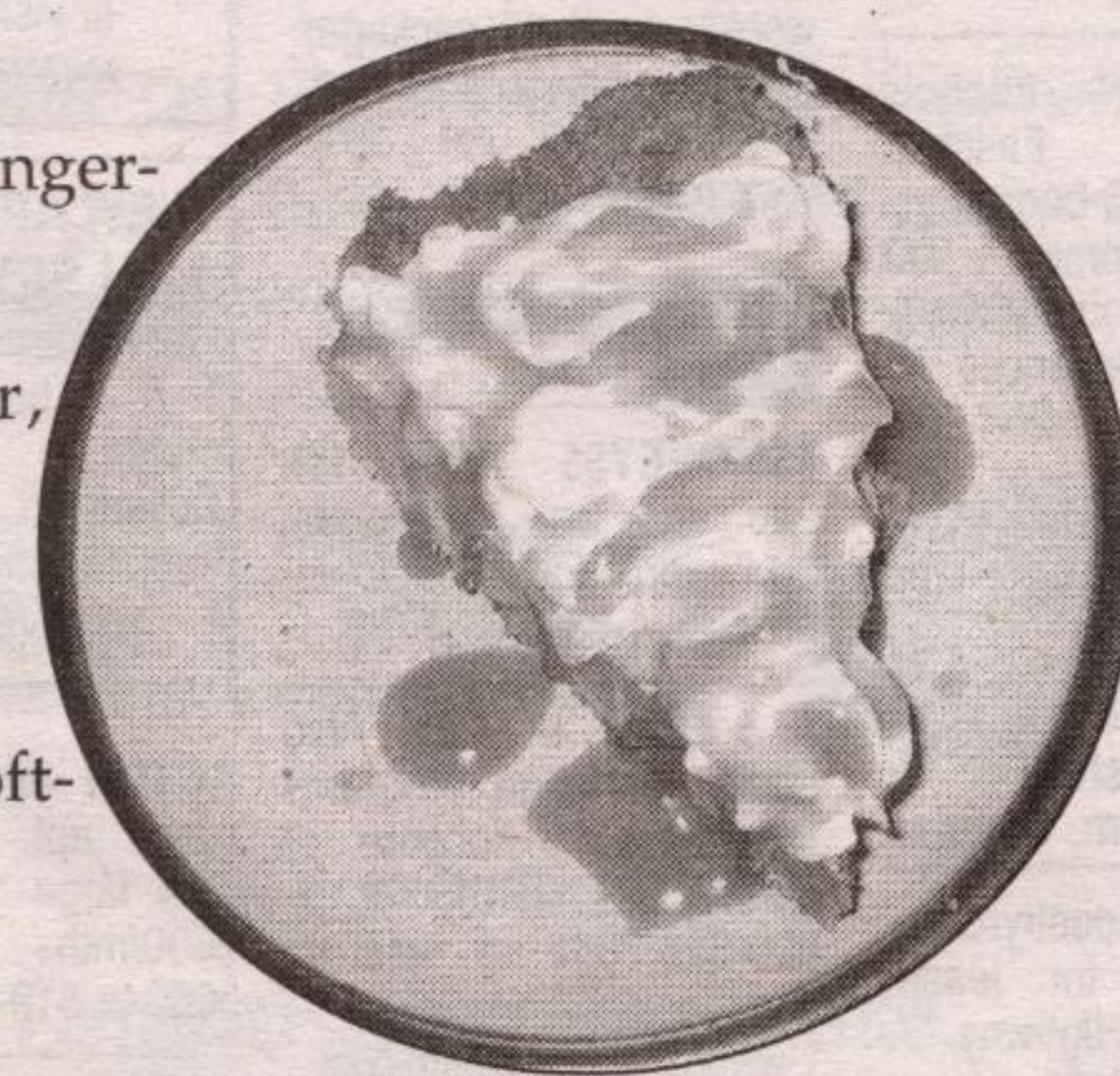
Caramel Pumpkin Ice Cream Pie

Ingredients

- 1 nine-inch graham cracker, ginger-snap or vanilla wafer pie shell
- 1 cup pure pumpkin
- 1/4 cup cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 quart vanilla ice cream, softened
- 1 12-oz. jar caramel topping
- whipped cream

Method

1. Combine pumpkin, spices and sugar. Mix well.
2. Fold in ice cream. Pour mixture into shell.
3. Cover and freeze until firm.
4. Slice and serve with caramel sauce and whipped cream.



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