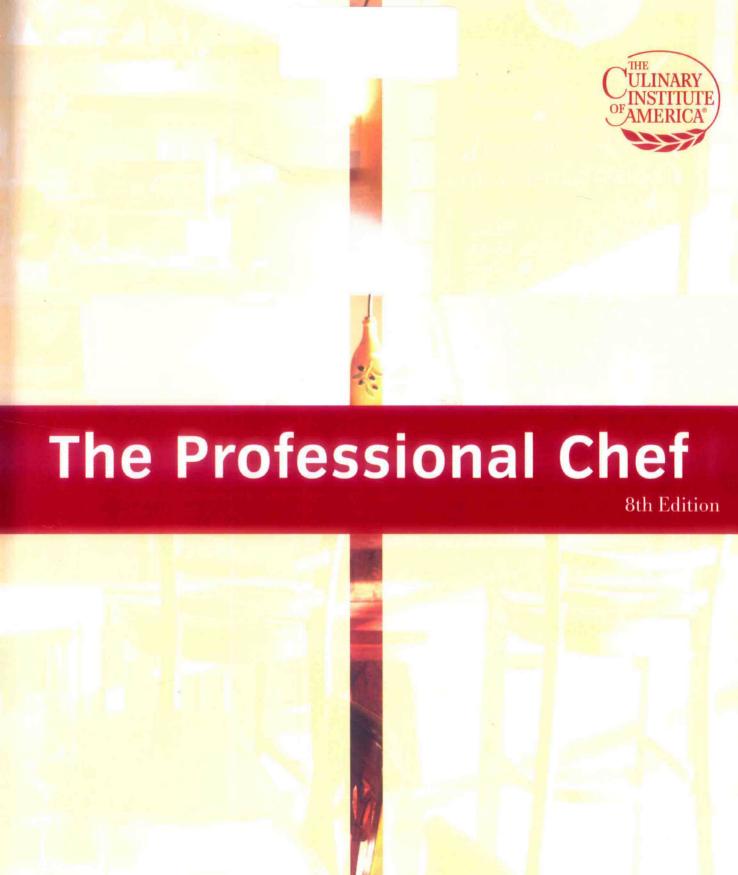
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Introduction

Becoming a chef is a career-long process. Cooking is a dynamic profession—one that provides some of the greatest challenges as well as some of the greatest rewards. There is always another level of perfection to achieve and another skill to master. It is our hope that this book will function both as a springboard for future growth and as a reference point to give ballast to the lessons still to be learned.

By nature of its encyclopedic subject coverage, this text is suited to a variety of curricula, whether as part of an existing program or through independent study. An instructor may choose to use all or part of its contents; the student may use it to advance his or her learning by employing it as a broad, basic text or as a reference tool to answer specific questions about a particular technique. The techniques as explained in this book have all been tested in the Institute's kitchens. Each represents one of many possible variations. The fact that all variations are not included in this text does not imply that other methods are incorrect. Experience will teach the student many "tricks of the trade." The title of this work should not put it into the rarified category of books to be used only by those working in restaurant or hotel kitchens. The basic lessons of cooking are the same whether one prepares food for paying guests or for one's family and friends. Therefore, we hope that those who look to cooking for a creative outlet will come to regard this book as a valuable tool.

The Professional Chef is suited to a variety of teaching situations because the material is arranged in a logical, progressive sequence. Chapter One covers the history of cooking as a profession and examines the skills and attributes of a professional chef and other members of the foodservice profession. (For more information about table service and dining room operations, consult At Your Service or Remarkable Service.)

Since foodservice is a business, some of the elementary aspects of food costing are discussed in Chapter Two, as well as how to adapt recipes, from this book or any other, for use in a specific professional kitchen. Knowing how to adapt recipes is useful for

scheduling, controlling costs, and improving quality. (For more details about culinary math, consult *Culinary Math*.) Nutrition and food science have become part of the everyday language of the professional kitchen, and Chapter Three reviews some basic concepts of nutrition and science, particularly as they relate to cooking. (For more information about nutritional cooking, consult *The Professional Chef's Techniques of the Healthy Cook*, Second Edition.) Food and kitchen safety are of increasing concern in all foodservice operations, and Chapter Four presents fundamental concepts and procedures for assuring that safe, wholesome food is prepared in a safe environment.

Another elemental base of information that benefits every professional chef is a basic understanding of the origins and cultures surrounding the foods we consume. This understanding will not only encourage respect for other foods and cuisines around the world, but will also help to bring about creative play that will lead to the development of new foods and cuisine. Part Two is devoted to exploring a few of the most influential cuisines around the world.

Counted among the basics in the kitchen is the ability to seek out and purchase the best possible ingredients. Part Three is a catalog of the ingredients and tools used in the professional kitchen and includes information regarding product specifications, purchasing, and such processing concerns as trim loss. Separate chapters are devoted to meats and poultry; fish; fruits, vegetables, and fresh herbs; dairy products and eggs; and nonperishable goods such as oils, flours, grains, and dried pastas. The information is presented in such a way that it can act as a quick reference to quality, seasonality, and appropriate cooking styles or techniques.

Cooking is not always a perfectly precise art, but a good grasp of the basics gives the chef or student the ability not only to apply the technique, but also to learn the standards of quality so that they begin to develop a sense of how cooking works. Part Four is devoted to stocks, sauces, and soups. The part opens with a chapter covering such basic mise en place techniques as preparing and using seasoning and aromatic

combinations (bouquet garni and sachet d'épices), thickeners (roux and arrowroot), and mirepoix.

Part Five presents the techniques used to cook meats, poultry, and fish. This part covers the basic fabricating methods for familiar cuts of meat, poultry, and fish and then demonstrates how to grill, roast, sauté, pan fry, stir fry, steam, poach, stew, and braise. These important lessons are presented in clear step-by-step photographs, with explanatory text and a model recipe.

In Part Six, chapters concentrate on preparation techniques for vegetables, grains and legumes, pasta and dumplings, and potatoes. Part Seven covers breakfast and garde manger, with chapters covering eggs, salad dressings and salads, sandwiches, and garde manger items such as pâtés and terrines. (For further information on these subjects, consult *Garde Manger: The Art and Craft of the Cold Kitchen.*) Baking and pastry is presented in Part Eight, with attention paid to the preparation of breads and rolls; cakes and cookies; pastry doughs and crusts; and a variety of fillings, icings, and glazes.

The recipes included in this book are an example of the wide range of possibilities open to the student

once the basics are mastered. It should be noted that these recipes have both metric and American measurements. The recipe yields reflect real-life cooking situations: some items, such as stocks and soups, are prepared in large quantities, while others, such as sautés and grills, are prepared à la minute, for a few portions at a time. Larger roasts, braises, stews, and side dishes generally have yields of 10 or 20 servings; any marinades, sauces, or condiments included in the recipes that are prepared in advance are normally given in quantities to produce a yield of 10 servings. These yields may not always suit the student who is using the book outside of a professional kitchen. In most cases, they can be reduced or increased in order to prepare the correct number of servings. Baking recipe yields are based on specific weight ratios, however, and must be followed exactly.

The new look of this edition reflects the way we think about teaching cooking. We learn best when we understand not only how to do something, but why we should do it that way. From this grounded approach, students at any level can confidently take new directions in their cooking careers.

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