

Gastronomy & Food Services

In the 16th century, 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. French cuisine is both a historic practice and a tradition rooted in the art of "eating well." France views gastronomy as nothing short of a "national treasure."

By the Middle Ages, France's great cooks had defined the country's culinary landscape. Taillevent, whose name now graces a great Parisian restaurant, and Sidoine Benoît, who invented the recipe for Caen-style tripe, are just two of the fathers of French gastronomy. In the late 18th century, Antoine Parmentier promoted the culinary use of the potato and the art of making fine bread. Other figures who shaped France's great culinary reputation include: Alexandre Dumas (senior); Antoine Beauvilliers, the inventor of the restaurant and author of *L'Art du Cuisinier* (1814); Auguste Escoffier; and Joseph Favre (1849-1903), who authored the *Dictionnaire Universel de la Cuisine* in the 1880s and founded the Académie Culinaire de France in 1883. A beacon for the culinary elite, the Académie is the oldest association of chefs and pastry makers in the world. Four categories of restaurants exist in France:

- Fine dining, France's area of excellence. Fine restaurants offer customers high-quality cuisine, distinctive wines, a warm welcome, attentive service, and a comfortable ambiance;
- Theme restaurants focus on a particular dimension of food, often a cultural one. Most have a highly distinctive logo.
- Fast-food restaurants serve food for on- or off-premise consumption, served in disposable packaging (fries, hamburgers, pizza, sandwiches, desserts, etc.). This category also includes ice-cream parlors and tea rooms.
- Institutional food service is common in three sectors: education (school/university cafeterias), health and social work (hospital cafeterias, retirement homes, and prisons/jails), and the workplace (public and private sector).

Gastronomy and the restaurant industry by the numbers

- 700,000 employees in the food services industry
- 100,000 traditional restaurants
- 200,000 companies
- € 61.8 billion in revenue (2013)
- 40% of pre-tax revenue from international tourism
- 10% of revenue from the agri-food industry

Source: Ministry of the Economy, Industry, and Digital Affairs, www.entreprises.gouv.fr

INTERNATIONAL

UNESCO placed the gastronomic meal of the French on the list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity in 2010. French gastronomy is a cultural asset with great importance to "cultural identity, as well as to the safeguarding of cultural diversity and creativity of humanity."

Paul Bocuse, Michel Bras, Alain Ducasse, Éric Frechon, Pierre Gagnaire, Alain Passard, Joël Robuchon, Guy Savoy, and Michel Troisgros are just a few chefs who have exported their French culinary expertise. Six are ranked among the world's top 10 chefs. These and other practitioners of the "taste professions" – chefs, cheese makers, bakers, pastry chefs (Pierre Hermé), and chocolatiers (Patrick Roger) – have carried abroad the singular French vision of *terroir*, taste, and luxury. The French culinary singularity is also sustained by the competition known as the *Meilleur Ouvrier de France* ("France's Best Practitioner"). The title of "best practitioner" is awarded in the fields of service, cooking, sommelier, cheese/dairy making, pastry making, and more.

Gastronomic and culinary criticism is a French invention that has garnered worldwide recognition. The discourse in French culinary guides can be as complex as art criticism or as simple as a descriptive list. In this respect, they mirror the restaurants they feature. Such guides include: Guide Bottin Gourmand, Guide Champéard, Guide Gault-Millau, Guide *Fooding*, Guide Hubert, Guide Rouge (or Guide Michelin). The 8th edition of the Michelin guide to Tokyo, the city with the most Michelin stars, features 551 restaurants, 226 of which have stars (12 with three stars and 52 with two stars).

France boasts nearly 1,000 different varieties of cheese, 43 of which have the PDO label (protected designation of origin), including: Brocciu (Corsica), Cantal (Auvergne), Cabécou (Périgord), Comté (Jura), Camembert (Normandy), Epoisses (Bourgogne), Munster (Alsace), Ossau-Iraty (Pyrenees), Reblochon (Savoy), and Roquefort (Aveyron).

Each September, the *Fête de la Gastronomie* is held in France and elsewhere in the world. In 2014, it included 9,000 events and 230 celebrations abroad. 1.8 million visitors attended and 280,000 professionals took part in the festivities.

Related fields

Food - Serving arts - Baking - Delicatessen - Chocolate - Pastry - Fine cuisine - Cheese - Hospitality - Enology - Bread - Desserts and candy - Fish - Sommelier - Tourism

Subfields

Bar - Bartending - Bistro - Brasserie - Cafe - Food shop - Chocolatier - Confectioner - Commis chef - Crêpe maker - Chef - Cheesemonger - Waiter - Manager - Ice-cream maker - Baker - Pastry chef - Pizzaiolo - Dishwasher - Restaurant - Server - Sommelier - Catering - Wine

Useful links

- Académie Culinaire de France: www.academieculinairedefrance.com
- Association Nationale des Formateurs en Pâtisserie: www.anfp.fr
- Centre de Ressources Nationales en Hôtellerie Restauration: www.hotellerie-restauration.ac-versailles.fr
- Le Collège Culinaire de France: www.college-culinaire-de-france.fr
- Confédération des Chocolatiers et Confiseurs de France: www.chocolatiers.fr
- Confédération Nationale de la Boulangerie-Pâtisserie Française: www.boulangerie.org
- École de Paris des Métiers de Table, du Tourisme et de l'Hôtellerie: www.epmth.org
- Fête de la Gastronomie: www.economie.gouv.fr/fete-gastronomie/
- France Alumni, discussion group on French gastronomy: www.francealumni.fr
- Guilde Internationale des Fromagers: www.guilededesfromagers.fr
- Journal des Restaurants Hôtels et Cafés: www.lhotellerie-restauration.fr
- Métiers de l'Alimentation: www.metiers-alimentation.ac-versailles.fr
- Information about France's food heritage: <http://alimentation.gouv.fr>
- Network of French hospitality and tourism schools: www.hotellerie-restauration.ac-versailles.fr
- Société des Meilleurs Ouvriers de France (MOF): www.meilleursouvriersdefrance.info
- Syndicat National de la Restauration Thématique des Chaînes: www.snrct.fr
- Union des Métiers et des Industries de l'Hôtellerie (HUMIH): www.umih.fr

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Secondary level

Many entry-level degrees in the food service industry are earned at secondary hospitality schools and vocational schools (*lycées professionnels*) open to international students, such as the Lycée Auffray de Versailles (10% international students), the Lycée Hôtelier de Marseille, and the Lycée Paul Augier de Nice. Secondary degrees are also offered by cooking schools and specialized institutes, such as the Cordon Bleu, Ferrandi (or the French School of Culinary Arts), the Institut Paul Bocuse in Lyon, Alain Ducasse Éducation in Argenteuil, the École Lenôtre in Plaisir, the École Maxim's Internationale de Paris, the École de Savignac, the Bordeaux École Supérieure de la Table, or the Institut National de la Boulangerie et de la Pâtisserie in Rouen.

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

The **Brevet d'Études Professionnelles** (BEP) is a national diploma that serves as a professional qualification. It allows the recipient to pursue a professional baccalaureate. Two distinct tracks are available: **hotel and restaurant trades** and **butchery-delicatessen**. Some 150 schools throughout France offer the BEP.

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 light cooking, specialized baking, restaurant pastry chef, restaurant pastry chef, baking and pastry making, and wine service).

The **Baccalauréat Professionnel**, a national diploma, certifies that the recipient is qualified for highly skilled professional work. The degree is offered in three areas: **butchery, delicatessen, and catering; baking and pastry making; and restaurant management**.

The **Brevet Professionnel** (BP) follows the professional baccalaureate. It offers training for jobs in the **creation and transformation of food products**: bartender, butcher, baker, cook, etc. Graduates have completed at least 400 hours of training.

Licence level

Preparatory program for the BTS in hospitality-food services (higher technical certificate) – (L1)

50 preparatory programs are offered by vocational secondary schools in as many French cities. This one-year program is required for students having earned a general secondary diploma or equivalent. Students having earned secondary diplomas in hospitality and food services are exempt. Upon completing the coursework and a four-month internship over the summer, students may apply for admission to a BTS program in hospitality-food services.

Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (higher technical certificate) (Secondary diploma +2 years of higher education) - (L2)

The **BTS in hospitality-food services** is offered by vocational secondary schools and apprentice training centers (CFA). It is offered by eight schools in seven French cities and prepares students for two distinct types of service jobs: “**Culinary and serving arts**” and “**Marketing and hotel management**.”

• www.campusfrance.org>Espace documentaire>Offre de formation>Fiches Diplômes>BTSA

Bachelor

(Secondary diploma +3 years of higher education) - (L3)

Ferrendi (French School of Culinary Arts) and Bordeaux École Supérieure de la Table offer two bachelor's degrees:

- **Restaurant management,**
- **Restaurant ownership.**

• www.ferrandi-paris.fr>Bachelors

Professional licence

(Secondary diploma +3 years of higher education) - (L2 +1 year)

A professional *licence* is available in three broad fields with various concentrations and specializations in the food services industry:

- **Arts, letters, and languages** (option: hospitality and tourism; specialization: **international fine dining**).
- **Law, economics, and management** (option: **hospitality and tourism**; specializations: restaurant and hotel management, management of food products, restaurants and cafeterias, international management, leadership and operations in luxury hotels and restaurants).
- **Humanities and social sciences** (option: **hospitality and tourism**; specializations: engineering and management in restaurants and cafeterias, and hotel and restaurant systems).

• www.campusfrance.org>Trouvez votre formation>Licence

Master level

Diplôme d'établissement / Master degree (Secondary diploma +5 years of higher education) – M2

Two schools offer master degrees:

- The Institut Paul Bocuse offers two degrees, one in international hospitality and food service management, and the other in culinary management and innovation.
 - www.institutpaulbocuse.com>Management culinaire
- The École Supérieure Internationale de Savignac offers a degree in hospitality, tourism, and restaurant management.
 - www.ecole-de-savignac.com>Formations

Master

(Secondary diploma +5 years of higher education) – M2

Students can earn master's degrees with concentrations in tourism in one of two broad fields:

- **Arts, letters, and languages** (option: foreign languages; specialization: hospitality and international food services);
- **Law, economics, and management** (specialization in management, tourism development, hospitality, and food services).

• www.campusfrance.org>Trouvez votre formation>Master

• **Diplôme National Supérieur d'Expression Plastique (DNSEP)**, a 2-year degree (180 ECTS credits) that caps the graduate phase of art education in France and aims to impart strength and structure to the student's personal research.

More than 20 schools offer a Design option. The École Supérieure d'Art et de Design in Reims offers a specialization in **culinary design**. After earning the DNSEP, students may move on to post-master or PhD research.

• ESAD Reims: www.esad-reims.fr/page/70.html

Beyond the master level

Certificat d'établissement (Master +1 year of higher education)– post-M

The École Nationale Supérieure d'Art et de Design in Reims offers a post-graduate certificate in **culinary design**.

• ESAD Reims: www.esad-reims.fr/page/70.html