CHOOSE YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS

Your exciting culinary career is well within reach! It’s time to turn your passion for food into your dream career at The Culinary Institute of America.

There are so many diverse and amazing paths you can choose—paths that will take you places you’ve never even imagined. On the following pages are some of the hottest career tracks in the food industry, and examples of CIA alumni who are actually doing these jobs.

It worked for them—why not you? Now is the time to start your journey, and have the career that you always wanted. It all begins at the CIA!

The following career descriptions are excerpted from Creating Your Culinary Career by Ron Hayes and The Culinary Institute of America (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014).
EXECUTIVE CHEF

The chef in charge of a kitchen has a wide range of responsibilities. The chef oversees the operation of the entire kitchen, and he or she is ultimately responsible for the food and the service offered by an establishment. To this person falls the responsibility for developing and maintaining the standards of preparation and service of food, in accordance with the practices of the company or facility. The chef develops menus and, where necessary and appropriate, develops and tests recipes to ensure that all menu items are properly and consistently prepared.

ERIK BATTES ’04
Executive Chef, Morimoto, New York City

Erik Battes began his food career as a teenage apprentice at the Wolfgang Puck Cafe in Los Angeles. Relocating to the East Coast to enroll at the CIA, he gained experience at iconic restaurants like Daniel, Le Bernardin, Aquavit, and Chanterelle before securing an externship at Jean-Georges. Erik ultimately returned to work for Chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten as chef de cuisine at his three-Michelin-star Columbus Circle flagship, where he was named one of Zagat's “30 Under 30” in New York City in 2012. A lifelong passion for Japanese cuisine led Erik to Morimoto, where he is currently developing new seasonally inspired dishes.

MOLLY BRANDT ’06
Executive Chef, CM Gourmet Market and Bistro, Westport, CT

Most recently serving as chef de cuisine of 150 Central Park onboard Royal Caribbean's Allure of the Seas, Molly Brandt developed and designed seasonal tasting menus, taking them from concept to plate while overseeing the restaurant’s fine-dining operations. Prior to that, she worked in the kitchens of many reputable restaurants, including the Michelin-starred Cafe Boulud in New York City. She has also competed on Bravo's Top Chef Texas. She helped open CM Gourmet Market and Bistro in 2013, and continues to consult as a chef writing recipes for the cruise industry.

1300+ hands-on KITCHEN HOURS at the CIA

OTHER EXEC CHEFS WHO ARE CIA GRADS:

Michael Ferraro ’02
Executive Chef, Delicatessen and MacBar, New York City

Enrique Olivera ’99
Executive Chef, Pujol, Mexico

Angelo Sosa ’97
Executive Chef/Co-Owner, Añejo Tequilaria y Restaurante and Poppy Den, New York City

Melissa Kelly ’88
Co-Owner and Executive Chef, Primo Restaurant, Rockland, ME

Jorge Collazo ’82
Executive Chef, New York City
Department of Education

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FOOD ENTREPRENEUR

Entrepreneurs do not need to be expert at every element of the business. They do, however, need to be expert at identifying complementary resources. There are those who have great, potentially profitable ideas but no aptitude for finances. Others may be incredibly motivating speakers who are better at presenting others’ ideas than coming up with their own. Some make magic with numbers yet are terrified to speak in front of a group. The most successful entrepreneurs identify their own strengths and weaknesses, and the strengths and weaknesses of others, then create teams that are stronger than the sum of their parts.

The restaurant industry is expected to add 1.3 million jobs over the next decade.

ROY CHOI ’98
Co-Founder and Executive Chef, Kogi BBQ, Los Angeles, CA

Born in Seoul, South Korea and raised in Los Angeles, Roy Choi is a true entrepreneurial trailblazer. Having graduated from the CIA, he went on to cook at the internationally acclaimed Le Bernardin in New York City and was named Best New Chef by Food and Wine magazine in 2010. Hailed as a food truck pioneer, Roy is co-founder and executive chef of Kogi BBQ, as well as the L.A. restaurants Chego!, A-Frame, and Sunny Spot. In 2013, he released his autobiography, L.A. Son: My Life, My City, My Food.

CAROLINA GOMEZ ’11
Owner, Three Little Pigs Charcuterie & Salumi, Washington, DC

After graduation from the CIA, Carolina Gomez and Jason Story ’11 decided to open the Three Little Pigs Charcuterie & Salumi shop in Washington, DC. In launching the business, Carolina used all the knowledge she gained not only in the kitchens and classrooms of the CIA, but during her externship at Mie n Yu in Georgetown. When she returned to campus, Carolina focused on enhancing her entrepreneurial and business skills in the college’s bachelor’s degree program. Taking that extra step has paid off—Three Little Pigs has been receiving rave reviews from customers.
FOOD & BEVERAGE MANAGER

This is an important position found in restaurants, both single and multi-unit, as well as hotels, convention centers, and resorts. Managing an operation is a job that requires many talents, including interpersonal skills to handle the tasks of hiring and training staff and dealing with customers, clients, and suppliers. It also requires business skills such as accounting, forecasting, costing, and short- and long-term planning and strategizing. The overall operation of a hotel or restaurant almost invariably benefits when the manager understands the operation of the kitchen, since it is generally the heart of any foodservice establishment.

VIRAJ BORKAR ’10
Manager, Knightsbridge Restaurant Group, Washington, DC

When Viraj Borkar was growing up in Pune, India, his mother’s creativity in the kitchen inspired him to earn his bachelor’s degree in hospitality in Mumbai and enroll at the CIA. After graduation, Viraj gained experience at Jean-Georges Vongerichten’s ABC Kitchen and at Vermillion in New York City. Vermillion owner Rohini Dey soon tasked Viraj with the management of both the Chicago and Manhattan restaurants. After a stint at the Michelin-starred Tamarind Tribeca in New York City, he joined the Knightsbridge Restaurant Group. Viraj has also developed an online chef-based dining concept.

THOMAS CARTER ’02
Co-Owner and Director of Beverage and Service, Estela, New York City

Before opening Estela, Thomas Carter was beverage director at the award-winning Blue Hill at Stone Barns in Manhattan. He previously worked in wine service for Alain Ducasse at the Essex House, and as a cook at a number of famed New York restaurants including Le Bernardin, Mercer Kitchen, and Union Pacific. Thomas teamed with James Beard Award-nominated chef Ignacio Mattos and Botanica owner Mark Connell to open Estela, a beverage-driven restaurant designed as an approachable, easy, and fun place to go. Estela features a wine list of over 200 mostly European selections from France (Rhône, Burgundy), Germany, and Italy.

76% of top employers prefer to hire CIA grads.

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FOOD STYLIST

The preparation of food being photographed and the way it is arranged is often the work of a food stylist. When you look at a magazine article and are struck by the way the food is spread out on a plate or the way it is garnished, you are usually reacting to the work of the food stylist. It is up to the stylist to make sure that the lettuce leaves are perfect and that the sauce is carefully ladled onto the plate after the chicken is arranged to achieve the greatest visual impact. A comprehensive knowledge of food—how to select the best product and apply the right technique—helps the stylist make any dish look spectacular.

Kersti Bowser ’01
Food Stylist and Owner, Gourmet Butterfly Media & Special Events, New York City

Growing up part-time in the mountainous region of Sweden sparked Kersti Bowser’s interest in the food world. Originally a fashion model who traveled the world, Kersti took the opportunity to learn about the indigenous foods and unique cooking styles of different cultures. In 1999, she followed her dream and enrolled at the CIA. Today she’s one of the most sought-after food stylists and culinary producers in the industry, with more than 1,000 shows to her credit, and several cookbook and magazine collaborations for top names such as Cat Cora, Ming Tsai, Tyler Florence, Rachael Ray, Rocco DiSpirito, Lidia Bastianich, Sandra Lee, Guy Fieri, Paula Deen, and Sara Moulton.

Kara Vogt ’06
Food Stylist, The Rachael Ray Show

After graduating from the CIA, Kara Vogt jumped right into the world of food styling, landing a job with Paula Deen in Savannah, GA. She’d travel from New York City to Savannah every couple of weeks to shoot a season’s worth of TV shows, and in between freelanced as a food stylist assistant for various magazines and companies such as Target and Dean & DeLuca. In 2007, Kara was hired for The Rachael Ray Show, where she purchases and preps all the food for the show, tests recipes, and briefs Rachael every morning on the day’s recipes. She even gets to do cooking demos and appear on the show from time to time!

The restaurant industry is the nation’s 2nd largest private employer.
FOOD WRITER

All you have to do is walk into any bookstore or do a simple search on the Internet to see that there is a large and seemingly inexhaustible market for all things culinary. Food publications range from single-subject books and blogs on anything from beans to chocolate to those that center on a particular type of cuisine or ethnic style. Some are encyclopedic in scope, while others specialize in quick tips and techniques for the home cook. The people who write the blogs or books, edit recipes, or acquire projects for publishing houses must have a good basic knowledge of food and cooking in order to stand out from the crowd.

PATRICK W. DECKER ’05
Project Manager, Scripps Networks Interactive and Freelance Food Writer

As project manager for the food category of Scripps Networks Interactive, Patrick Decker works with teams that launch food- and entertainment-related content packages for FoodNetwork.com, CookingChannelTV.com, and Food.com. He’s written for Edible Hudson Valley, epicurious.com, and the CIA, and is a contributor to the Cooking Channel’s “Devour” blog and RachaelRay.com. After graduation, he went to work in broadcast, web, and print media as a food stylist, recipe developer and tester, and video producer for the culinary teams of Food Network stars like Rachael Ray, Sandra Lee, and Marc Forgione.

FRANCIS LAM ’03
Editor-at-Large, Clarkson Potter

Francis Lam is editor-at-large at Clarkson Potter, an imprint of Random House that publishes high-profile books by the likes of the Lee Brothers, Martha Stewart, Mario Batali, José Andrés, and Hugh Acheson. Francis was previously a staff writer at Gourmet magazine, contributing writer for Salon.com, and features editor at Gilt Taste, which was awarded six IACP awards and four James Beard award nominations. His own writing has been nominated for a James Beard award and three IACP awards, winning one. He’s also a recurring judge on Bravo’s Top Chef Masters.

There are more than 21,000 food blogs on the Internet.
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R&D) CHEF

Everyone who produces a piece of equipment that is used in a kitchen, or a bottled sauce, spice, herb, or mustard, would like to be able to help their potential customer get the most out of their product. This is important in order to build consumer confidence, increase repeat business, and help keep their company at the top of the heap. Who better than a chef or someone trained in the culinary arts to help devise recipes, uses, videotapes, booklets, pamphlets, and cookbooks that promote the product? Areas for R&D chefs include product development, equipment design and development, test kitchens, menu development, and corporate research and development.

OTHER CIA ALUMS IN R&D:

Meredith Keiling ’09
CCS, Senior Product Development Technologist, Pepperidge Farm, New York City

Kyle Shadix ’96
CRC, MS, RD, Corporate Executive Research Chef, PepsiCo Global R&D

Dan Coudreaut ’95
Director of Culinary Innovation, McDonald’s Corporation

Dr. Christopher Loss ’93
Professor, Department of Culinary Science and Director, Menu Research and Development, The Culinary Institute of America

Tom Gumpel ’86
Vice President for Bakery Development, Panera Bread

CHAD SCHAFER ’03
Director of Culinary, Cargill

Chef Chad Schafer is the director of culinary at Cargill, an international producer of food and beverage ingredients, agricultural commodities, and other such products. In addition to recipe and menu ideations, Chad provides a culinary perspective on product development and current trends. He was instrumental in the development and introduction of the natural sweetener Truvia to market and worked with a national cereal brand to revamp their product to include more whole grains. Chad joined Cargill in 2010 after serving as senior research chef for Givaudan Flavors and Fragrances.

AJ SCHALLER ’05
Culinary Manager, Dinex Group, New York City

Famed chef Daniel Boulud values AJ Schaller’s work so much, he’s building her a kitchen attached to her office. As culinary manager for Boulud’s Dinex Group, AJ does it all—recipe testing for the company, consumerizing recipes for media publication, writing plans for the Safety Department, performing prep work and cooking for Chef Boulud’s travel functions, and more. After taking her externship at Restaurant Daniel as a CIA student, AJ kept a foot in the door and started working there in garde manger and rotisserie after graduation. She moved on to catering before Chef Boulud asked her to do recipe editing and other important initiatives for the company.

R&D chefs earn some of the highest pay in the industry, according to a recent American Culinary Federation survey.
SOMMELIER

Restaurants that pride themselves on their wine lists usually employ a sommelier, who is an expert on wine and wine service. This expertise, married with a well-rounded knowledge of food and the culinary arts, assures that the guests who visit the restaurant have a great array of selections. The wine professional’s ability to perfectly match a particular vintage with the cuisine being served also greatly enhances the dining experience for patrons. And the sommelier is able to give each one of his or her service staff the training and information necessary to provide each guest exemplary service.

A SAMPLING OF SOMMELIERS WHO ARE CIA GRADS:

Diane McMartin ’11
Wine Consultant,
Chain Bridge Cellars,
McLean, VA

Amy Racine ’11
Sommelier,
Sons & Daughters,
San Francisco, CA

Bijou Robertson ’02
Co-Owner,
Zhoo Zhoo Wines,
Hells Canyon, ID

Jason Smith ’98
Master Sommelier,
Bellagio,
Las Vegas, NV

James Tidwell ’98
Master Sommelier,
Four Seasons Resort and Club,
Dallas, TX

CARLTON McCOY ‘06
Wine Director, The Little Nell, Aspen, CO

As if being wine director at the only five-star, five-diamond hotel and resort in Aspen isn’t prestigious enough, Carlton McCoy is also a Master Sommelier. He joins an elite group—in North America there are 135 who have earned the title, and he is only the second of African-American descent. Plus, he was recently named to Forbes magazine’s prestigious “30 Under 30” list in the Food category. Carlton has also worked with Marcus Samuelsson at Aquavit, opened Craft Steak with Tom Colicchio, and served as an expeditor at Per Se with Thomas Keller and Jonathan Benno. He then landed at CityZen at The Mandarin Hotel with Eric Ziebold, and joined the opening crew of Ziebold’s Soul/Wester restaurant.

GRETCHEL THOMAS ’03
Wine and Spirits Director, Barcelona Wine Bar

At Barcelona, Gretchen Thomas supervises the largest Spanish wine program in the United States; oversees all wine, spirits, and beer selections for Barcelona restaurants; and manages wine and mixology training and development, as well as beverage-themed events and classes. She has earned various levels of certification from the Wine & Spirit Education Trust and the Court of Master Sommeliers, and is a certified Spanish Wine Educator from the Wine Academy of Spain, where she scored in the top 15 in the world. She previously worked as a sommelier and restaurant manager in the Hudson Valley, most notably at Gigi Trattoria in Rhinebeck, NY.

The CIA’s Rudd Center in California was named one of the 5 Best Places to Study Wine in the U.S. by Food & Wine magazine.
CATERER

From a meal in a prestigious stadium skybox to a mobile lunch wagon on a movie set, catering can be bone china elegant or paper plate casual, but it always means serving good-quality food and drink to many people. The banquet chef must be able to arrange various styles of buffets and present the foods in a graceful and appropriate fashion, as well as determine how best to serve the food. Event planners are often involved in several aspects of a function and rely a great deal upon their managerial skills. To be a successful caterer you need to be able to visualize the entire affair from beginning to end.

The U.S. Catering Industry includes about 10,000 companies with combined annual revenue of $7 billion.

JAIME LEPE, JR. ’08
Catering Manager, Tropical Mexico and Mexico Lindo, Pomona, CA

Jaime Lepe, Jr. grew up in the restaurant business—his father is president of JML Mexican Restaurant, Inc., which owns Mexico Lindo and Tropical Mexico restaurants. Jaime went on to earn a hotel and restaurant management degree from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. While there, he gained experience during internships at Universal Studios Hollywood, Westin Hotels, and Sysco. He then enrolled at the CIA at Greystone, where he had the chance to work catered events on campus. Jaime returned to the family business after graduation and launched JML’s catering division.

MEG SANTONI ’12
Kitchen/Event Chef, Waters Fine Foods & Catering, San Diego, CA

For pre-med student Meg Santoni, cooking was a way to help defuse the stress of difficult classes at San Diego State University. She enjoyed it so much, she changed her major to food and nutrition and ultimately attended the CIA’s California campus. While there, she worked with the catering department on Greystone’s many conferences and staged in Chef Douglas Keane’s restaurant, Cyrus. After graduation, Meg returned to San Diego and landed a position with Tracy Borkum’s Urban Kitchen Group—which includes the award-winning Kensington Grill and Cucina Urbana—before joining the Waters catering team in 2013.
BAKING & PASTRY CHEF

Bakers must be able to scale (or measure) ingredients accurately, mix them properly, and bake them correctly. This is not just a simple matter of following a formula. On any given day, the air may be more humid, or the flour may be a little harder or drier than the last batch. Only bakers who are skilled enough to see or feel the difference in a dough and make the correct adjustments can ensure consistency. The work that is done in pastry shops is even more exacting than that done in bakeshops. The creations that are produced require a certain sense of form, line, and balance. Working with chocolate and sugar are among the special skills that pastry chefs must have. Both bakers and pastry chefs must also have a keen sense of art and design during the creative process.

OTHER B&P CHEFS WHO ARE CIA GRADS:

Laura Pyles ’06
Pastry Chef, Revel and Joule, Seattle, WA

Duff Goldman ’98
Owner, Charmed City Cakes, Baltimore, MD

Johnny Iuzzini ’94
Pastry Chef/Consultant, Sugar Fueled, Inc.

Sonia Arias ’90
Executive Pastry Chef, Jaso Restaurant, Mexico City, Mexico

KISHI ARORA ’04
Owner and Founder, Foodaholics, New Delhi, India

Kamal Grant’s love for baking started at a very young age. So when he joined the Navy, Kamal used that as an opportunity to pursue his dream as a world-class baker. He enrolled at the CIA once his enlistment ended, and after graduation worked as a production supervisor at the Flowers Baking Company. But Kamal wanted his own shop, and took a big chance with the business plan for his small bakery, Sublime Doughnuts in Atlanta. It worked—the bakery has done so well that he has since opened a Sublime Doughnut in Bangkok and is considering other franchising opportunities. And Kamal’s creations have landed on the “best doughnuts” lists of Food & Wine, Bake, and US News & World Report magazines.

KAMAL GRANT ’04
Owner, Sublime Doughnuts, Atlanta, GA

Kishi Arora always had a passion for baking, so she left her studies in India to attend the CIA. On vacation back home, she met Lokesh Bharwani and together they created Mad Over Donuts in the Great India Place Mall. As executive chef, Kishi worked with food technologists in Singapore to come up with a unique yeast-based dough. She then created both sweet and savory flavors that helped launch the company’s very successful line of donuts. Now a consultant for Mad Over Donuts and Godrej’s Nature Basket, Kishi owns her own customized online bakery company, Foodaholics, and her Ask Kishi column regularly appears in the Indian version of Good Housekeeping magazine.