



STRATFORD
CHEFS
SCHOOL

CELEBRATING • ANTICIPATING
40 YEARS

Becoming
a Chef
a student's story





instagram @stratfordchefsschool



first contact

Stratford Chefs School looks like a great place to learn to be a chef. I checked out the website at stratfordchef.com and learned that I can become a Cook Apprentice and attain my **Red Seal Certificate**.

An Admissions Liaison from the School can come to my High School to do a presentation for teachers, students and parents. I also have the option of going to Stratford for a campus tour, which I signed up for. It is a two-year program; each session runs from mid-October until the beginning of March. Between the first and second year students are required to work in kitchens to gain valuable work experience. The classes are small and students get to work with top Canadian chefs.



Explore the culinary world during an intensive one-week course that offers participants a sneak peek into the Stratford Chefs School's renowned professional culinary program. This hands-on intensive is perfect for anyone wanting to develop their skills to a more professional level.



personal visit

I spent a day at the Stratford Chefs School. Wow! The students start at 8:00 in the morning with a four-hour cookery class taught by an expert Chef Instructor. They have theory courses in subjects like Food Costing and Culinary Management in the afternoon. In the evening, they either serve in the Dining Room where the second year students are cooking dinner for the public, or take Pastry class.

Student manuals and recipes are on iPads; students use them everywhere. I got to help a couple of students prepare Entrecôte à la Béarnaise in Cookery class. They're very precise about everything: measuring, knife cuts, stirring, seasoning. **I'd love to have skills like these students – and they're only in first year!** The Admissions Liaison spoke with me afterwards and answered every question I had; my parents were impressed as well.

The School admits up to 45 students to the first year of the program. For cooking classes, students split into groups, so **there are never more than 15 students in the kitchen at a time.** The Chef Instructor moves around, closely coaching, ensuring students are preparing their recipes correctly. At the end of cookery classes, students eat all the food they've made. It was delicious! **I've decided Stratford is the school for me.**



#LoveStratford #StratfordON



moving to stratford

Stratford is a very beautiful small city, with swans on the Avon River and a heritage feel to the downtown core.

You can pretty much walk everywhere.

The School does not have a student residence, but there are lots of places to live in town during the winter, when the theatre is closed for the off-season.

The School provided a list of potential rental accommodations. After contacting the rental owners, I visited several and decided to live at a Bed & Breakfast: the rent was reasonable, the room large.



...few places in Ontario are lovelier and more alive with culture and character.



instagram @stratfordchefsschool



preparatory course

Since I did not have the required restaurant experience, I enrolled in the preparatory course - a **5 day intensive course in cooking basics**. It gave me a chance to develop my knife skills and gain some confidence in the kitchen. I also got to know a dozen other first year students in the same boat – and became familiar with the kitchens in which we will be learning. The instructor was patient and extremely knowledgeable. By the end of the course, I felt ready for school. **I can't wait to get started!**

orientation week

During Orientation Week, we learned about Stratford Chefs School (SCS) policies; they are strict about punctuality, attendance, uniforms and academic honesty. I **brought my own set of professional knives and an iPad which I have loaded with all my course manuals**. With the help of School staff, we also reviewed and completed some important paperwork, including our **Apprenticeship Contract**.

During the evening Welcome event, we got to know each other over food and drinks. I've met lots of people who love cooking and food almost as much as I do! In the first week, we completed the required Sanitation course, so we know how to work safely in the kitchens.



theory classes

Unlike community college programs, SCS offers an enriched program, which includes a range of academic courses in both Levels 1 and 2. Upon graduation, not only do you have excellent cooking and service skills, you also understand culinary history, ingredients and nutrition, and you know the fundamentals of public speaking, food writing and communications, kitchen management, restaurant design and business plans.

The academic courses include:

BUSINESS An introduction to the business management techniques needed to become a professional chef/restaurant owner. I can imagine this information being super useful when I open my own restaurant.

COMMODITIES An in-depth study of individual ingredients. Fascinating.

COMMUNICATIONS How to design and deliver speeches and effectively communicate in the kitchen and dining room. Terrifying, but my confidence has grown so much.

CULINARY MANAGEMENT A study of current and historical professional kitchen practice; culinary terminologies and processes; the duties and organization of a kitchen staff. A lot of history, but all kitchen and restaurant related.



FOOD COSTING Math as applied to recipes and cost control.

FOOD HISTORY The history of western cooking from the classical era to the early 20th century; food politics and 20th century culinary leaders.

LAB PACKAGES A major Level 2 assignment completed by student chefs for the particular menus they will be preparing for the public.

NUTRITION Modern nutritional theory and its application to menu planning in restaurants. Helpful when dealing with diner allergies and food sensitivities.

RECIPE SPECS A series of assignments analyzing recipes in detail: a fair bit of work, but I understand recipes much better now.

RESTAURANT DESIGN A study of restaurant design concepts, which looks at the impact of decor, food and drink presentation, background music, lighting, flowers, style of service and graphics.

WINE The fundamentals of wine terminology, service techniques, label information and appellation concepts – also wine tasting!

WRITING How to write restaurant reviews, food blogs, marketing pitches, promotional copy for social media platforms, menus, cover letters and resumes.



#culinaryindustry



practical classes

These intensive courses, usually four hours in duration, are taught in groups of 12 to 15 students per instructor, and include:

COOKERY A daily hands-on class in fundamental cooking methods, using classical and modern recipes, taught by experienced chefs. We learn to prepare a vast range of dishes with precision and accuracy. Really demanding/exhausting, but worth it.

PASTRY A practical course in pastry and bread-making: delicious!

SERVICE We learn the basics of serving food and wine, how to hold trays and plates, pour wine, and place glasses, cutlery and dishes. Service is regarded as very important at the School, as it can make or break a restaurant.

LARDER This is like Commodities, only hands-on, in the kitchen, cooking with the ingredients! The course covers the basics in butchery, fish and shellfish preparation and garde-manger work: pâtés, terrines, sausages, curing, preserving, cold and hot sauces.



#scsdinnerlab



dinner labs

In Level 2, students work in set groups throughout the year preparing meals that are served to the public. Students rotate through all the kitchen and front-of-house positions over the course of the school year. Chef Instructors and Guest Chefs supervise, and each student receives several opportunities to act as student chef, organizing and directing activity in the kitchen for that dinner lab. This is the most challenging and exciting part of the SCS experience.



My favourite thing about Stratford Chefs School was working with peer and Chef instructors with many different histories and experiences.

Donna Borooah, Alumna



#culinaryleaders



dinner labs

Dinners are served Tuesday through Saturday. Pre-prep for dinners begins the night before. Early in the year, the dinners feature delicious four course menus to ground us all in advanced culinary technique, building on what we learned in Level 1 and in the summer leading up to Level 2. Later on, dinners highlight menus from the restaurants of internationally renowned chefs; we also have the opportunity to work with Canadian guest chefs. We execute dinner service for the public, and the standards for these dinners are very high. Student performance in the kitchen and the dining room is evaluated by a team of instructors. Students are invited to dine at the Labs twice each year.





#scsguestchef



canadian guest chefs

For the last few weeks of the School year, a series of Canadian Guest Chefs come to the School to showcase their signature menus. Many of these chefs are SCS Alumni who have opened their own restaurants in different parts of Canada. It's fascinating to experience their different approaches to food, very inspiring! Students get a chance to work alongside these Chef mentors and explore the possibility of working in their restaurants after graduation.

joseph hoare gastronomic writer in residence

All of the SCS students are passionate about cooking, but some are also keen on writing. Every year an acclaimed food writer comes to the School for two weeks to share their expertise with the students. We get a chance to hone our writing skills on various projects and the writer-in-residence provides us with feedback.





#culinaryindustry



events

Students participate in special School events – such as the End of Year Gala – which features food prepared by them. These unique opportunities provide valuable professional experiences in different venues.



You will not be able to find another school in the province that teaches you so much in such a compact amount of time.

Laura Edwards, Alumna





#specialevents



SEASON OPENER

Just before classes start, patrons of the School are invited to an informal event to launch the Season. Level 2 students are guests at this event. We get to eat and drink and mingle with folks who are regular diners at the Labs. A fun evening for all!

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

The Stratford Chefs School community joins together to host fundraising functions for the School. Collaboratively staff, faculty, students and board members participate to plan, host and execute these exquisite events. Multi-course meals and live auctions are a must!





graduation

Graduation takes place in early June. Many of us have been away working for a few months by then, so it's a chance to reconnect with classmates and, of course, get our Diplomas! We elect a class Vaedictorian at the end of the School year and the ceremony closes with that person's speech.

Our celebration began with sparkling wine and hors d'oeuvres immediately after the class photograph and continued for some time. We did it!



#stratfordchefalumni



alumni

Now I am part of Stratford Chefs School Alumni Association (SCSAA), the School's diverse network of alumni who have built careers in the culinary industry across the country. These contacts will be helpful as I get more experience and build my career. I can't wait to meet more people who have trained at the School and gone on to great things!

The Stratford Chefs School was a life-changing experience. It's where the best chefs train.

Where the BEST CHEFS train

Stratford Chefs School is a not-for-profit career college focused on the innovative, hands-on training of high quality, aspiring chefs and culinary entrepreneurs.


Established in 1983, Stratford Chefs School has set the standard of excellence for culinary training in Canada, graduating nearly 900 alumni who contribute to our distinctive Canadian cuisine. Our unique Apprenticeship program provides students with a thorough grounding in the theory and practice of classical cuisines and the business elements of operating successful restaurants in today's market. Stratford Chefs School is one of Canada's most successful and respected culinary institutions and is continually evolving to meet the needs of its students and the culinary community.

To learn more about becoming a student at Stratford Chefs School, please contact our Admissions Liaison:

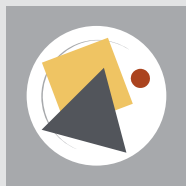
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Follow us on social media for the latest updates on visiting chefs, special events, weekly menus and more.

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