

HOW TO USE A KNIFE

GLOSSARY



Executive Chef: Chef in charge of kitchen.

Sous Chef: Second-in-command chef.

Front of House: Staff who work in customer-facing positions, like waiters, bartenders, and managers, generally more people-friendly and focused on customer experience rather than food.

Back of House: Staff in kitchen, often have an adversarial relationship with Front of House, who are viewed as weak, vain, selfish, and who often make more money than blue collar cooks.

Food Runner: The only position in the house that is a mix of front of house and back of house. Though a runner is tipped out by waiters, he is under the command of a chef. He takes the food out to customers.

The Line: The cooks actively working on food for customers.

Line Cooks: The cooks working on the line preparing food as it is ordered.

Station: The area of the line assigned to a particular cook, i.e. “grill” is a station.

Expeditor: Person in charge of calling out orders from tickets sent through Micros or some other restaurant software system. This person makes sure that cooks know what is needed and help them stay organized. Usually a chef fills this role, but in better organized kitchens, a runner may do this job and be paid a bit more than normal.

Tickets: Sometimes called “dukes” these are the receipts the kitchen processes as orders. A ticket comes in, an expeditor calls it out, and the line cooks make the order. Each ticket will have a full table’s order with position numbers corresponding to seats at the table. The Expeditor will work with the runner to match plates to positions.

“Fire” or “Pick up”: What an expeditor says when he wants food made immediately.

“Order in”: What an expeditor says when he is listing food ordered for second or third courses. This way cooks know what will be coming soon and will start cooking. When they receive the fire order they will finish cooking.

Prep Cooks: Cooks working on preparing food to later be cooked when ordered. A prep cook may work in separate room, chopping, seasoning, doing any work that is not immediately responding to an order.

Covers: The number of customers served in a night, i.e. fifty covers are fifty people served food/drinks during that shift.

Turn and Burn: A restaurant that has quick turnover, like a diner. Customers come in for a sandwich and leave quickly. This is contrasted with nicer dining spots where customers linger over a theatrical meal. It’s also a term for cheaper restaurants where the chief strategy for making money is to serve as many customers as possible.

The Pass: The table where finished dishes are set by line cooks to be inspected by the chef or expeditor.

Garde-manger (“gard-man-ZHAY”): The “station” on the line devoted to plating cold food like salads and sometimes dessert. Usually this is the most inexperienced cook on the line.

Steps of Service: Typically a front of house concept, this refers to the list of tasks needed to serve a table: approach, offer specials, get drink order, get food order, check in, clear empty plates, reset, clear again, offer dessert, give check.

Side Work: Work performed at the beginning or end of a shift unrelated to the direct demands of serving customers. For waiters this may involve cleaning or folding napkins, for kitchen staff this involves cleaning their stations.