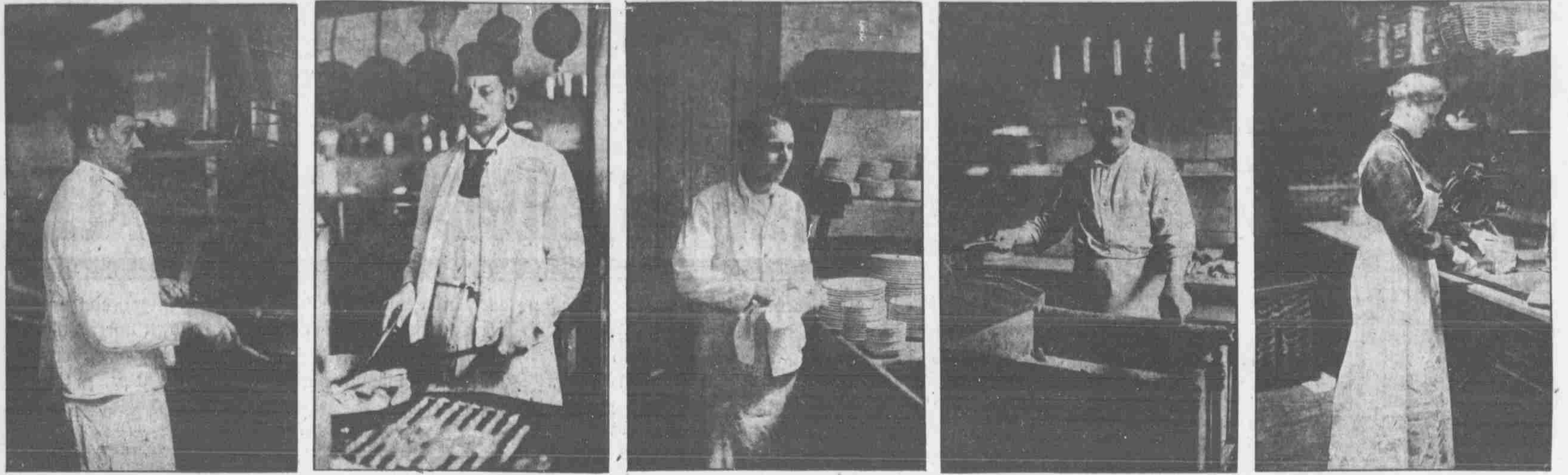


# What Goes on Behind the Scenes in the Kitchen of a Modern Hotel



THE CHEF WHO FRIES

CHEF OF THE BROILER

CARES FOR FINE CHINAWARE

WHERE POTS AND PANS ARE SCRUBBED

SEE SLICES BREAD FOR THOUSANDS

**T**HE man who snatches a hurried lunch at a restaurant or sits down to a well appointed meal at an Omaha hotel, seldom contemplates upon the process by which the food set before him has been prepared. The man who has boarded for years at one of the large establishments may never have wondered at the remarkable system which has made it possible for him and a thousand others to be served daily with the choicest viands with never one article spoiled or stale.

System, science, skill and common sense unite to make this possible. Refrigerating, cooking and cleaning are cardinal principles of the business. The first must be done well or the raw material will spoil; the second must be done well or the customers will abuse the place and withdraw their patronage, and the third must be done well or the department of health will interfere.

All of these are carried on admirably in Omaha hotels and restaurants. Most of the establishments use ice for refrigerating, but several have their own plants and a system of piping for the distribution of cold air. This is the most economical system after the first expense of installing it. An engine must be provided for condensing of the ammonia gas, which is the method by which the refrigeration is produced. Pipes must be installed running through all the refrigerator boxes.

**Inside the Refrigerator.**

The view through the double glass window in the thick door of each refrigerator box is beautiful. The interior can be illuminated by turning a button on the outside which lights an incandescent light within. Each box contains different provisions arranged so, partly to prevent tainting and partly because meats, for instance, require a lower temperature than fruit. The view into one refrigerator shows fruits; boxes of oranges, bunches of bananas, barrels of apples, grapes, pineapples and rare fruits. In another box are the big meats; sides of beef, pork, veal and mutton. Smaller meats, poultry and game occupy another box. The refrigeration pipes are covered with frost, several inches thick at some places. Some of the meats are buried in the frost. They would keep for months at such a temperature. In establishments where ice is purchased, this item of expense is large. One restaurant has an ice bill amounting to from \$300 to \$500 a month.

**Refrigeration of the Chef.**

The cooking department of the hotel or restaurant is of course the most important. All other departments of kitchen work are merely subservient to it. The chef is the major-domo of this realm. Upon his rests the responsibility of running the kitchen. Upon his gastronomic experience and culinary skill depends the success of the department. Now, there may be diversity of cooks, but the same chef. There are many departments of the culinary art practiced in Omaha. One large hotel has, beside its chef, one "fry cook," two "broilers," one "cold meat and oyster man" and a "vegetable cook." The fry cook has made a special study of fried meats, the broiler of broiled meats, the vegetable cook of vegetables, while the cold meat and oyster man is versed in the best and most artistic means of cutting sundry kinds of meats and the most poetic way of serving oysters.

Nor must the pastry cook be forgotten. He is an expert in the construction of those mechanical devices which make the palette after the more substantial viands have filled up their place. He is particularly skillful in the concoction of that great American staple—pie. The pastry cook is not always a man. One large restaurant employs four women skilled in the making of pies and cakes. They bake 200 pies a day.

**Steam for Cooking.**

Several Omaha establishments use steam for cooking. Steam cooking is the latest advance in kitchen economy. Coal and even gas are out of style. The utility of steam is wonderful. It is supplied by a boiler and conducted in pipes all through the establishment, giving its heat wherever required. It boils the coffee, cooks the vegetables, keeps the plates and cups warm, keeps pies and rolls warm, distributes its heat to the heating table, where viands

are dished out to customers; boils the water in copper egg poachers, keeps the water in the dish washing tanks warm and performs numerous other services in an unobtrusive and very satisfactory and economical manner. Coal and gas are still used in most of the restaurants for cooking meats, and, of course, nothing will take the place of charcoal for broiling.

The colonels, captains and aide-de-camp of the chef and his staff of cooks are many. The vegetable peelers and fowl pluckers do nothing all day long but peel potatoes and other vegetables and pluck fowls and skin rabbits and small game.

The storehouse man's time is taken up in the large establishments with receiving and giving out the provisions from the storehouse. In some places the value of the average stock always on hand is several thousand dollars. One Omaha place has on hand now 1,500 jars of preserves and fruits so like what "mother used to make" that the customer will never be able to tell the difference. These were all canned on the premises. In the same storehouse is nearly \$1,000 worth of table linen. Barrels of pickles, sugar and salt, stacks of canned goods and all the articles used in a restaurant are to be found there.

The people who wash the dishes and polish the cooking utensils are important aides of the chef. The dishwashing is usually done in a large tank. The dishes are brought from the dining room in great iron-bound baskets made of galvanized iron. Knives, forks and spoons require a special treatment. Boys or girls are employed to look after these, which have to be scoured regularly. The knives must be run through a polishing and sharpening machine.

The porters are important in their work. On them depends the cleanliness of the es-

tablishment. One place employs eight men for this purpose. Few private kitchens are cleaner than the kitchens of Omaha hotels, for the latter are about as clean as it is possible to make them. The woodwork has that grey shrouded appearance which comes from much application of soap and water. The pots and pans shine in their immaculateness; the refrigerators smell clean and the floors are spotless.

The waiters also fill an important position

on the regular staff of men necessary to operate the restaurant. In hotels where meals are served a la carte on the European plan, there is also a check girl. It is her duty to see that the waiter has received from the kitchen only what his guest's order calls for and that the amount has been added up correctly.

Labor-saving machinery of all kinds is used, such as the bread cutter, a circular knife which slices bread as fast as the loaves can be fed to it; and the ice cuber, which cuts ice into cubes to fit into glasses of cold drinks.

Everything is run on a strictly business system. The keeper of the storehouse in a large establishment is responsible to the last ounce for all that it contains. He dispenses provisions only on the written order of the chef. Every pound of meat, lard, sugar or butter is accounted for. At the end of the business day the total receipts are turned over to the auditing department, together with the total expenditures, and then the percentage of profit is figured. It may be 63.2 per cent, which is about the average in one Omaha hotel, run on the European plan. If the percentage runs too low prices may be raised or portions diminished.

Wages and working hours of the employees of eating establishments vary as in other occupations. Chefs get as high as \$40 a week, while the pay of cooks ranges from \$20 down to \$12 a week. A chef is his own boss and works such hours as he pleases. Cooks, as a rule, work from eight to twelve hours. In the all-night establishments one shift of cooks is kept on from 7 p. m. until 7 a. m. The day men work in shifts and their daily working time amounts to about ten hours.

**Caring for the Silverware.**

Wealthy trades people go to the otobrate hired carriages and hire a private hall for their party in a fashionable country tavern, when the feast on the best viands that mine host can procure and drink his best and oldest wines, not omitting champagne and liquors after dinner. The women in this station of life in Rome are renowned for their gigantic size. They dress as superbly as duchesses and princesses, but on their shoulders they wear the old Roman shawl, which they generally leave open in order to display all the jewelry with which their hair, neck, ears, wrists and fingers are bedecked. Their position is determined by the amount of jewelry they wear on these occasions. Even should they be awarded, they will redeem them for the day, though they may be compelled to reappear on the following day. They wear nothing on their head, but their hair is faultlessly dressed. The higher classes of Roman keep their otobrate at their own country houses, to which they invite their friends.

**The Day of the Dead.**

The first nine days of November are devoted to the dead and the second day of the month is called "the day of the dead." Romans have a pretty sad saying respecting this, which is that "if it rains on the day of the dead it is the tears of the dead which fall on earth." On "all souls' day" the always clean cemeteries are made especially neat and the graves are decorated and surrounded by as many lights as the owner can afford. The cemeteries look lovely on these days, being converted into gardens of beautiful flowers, whilst each one is in a blaze of light. Some princely families spend 20,000 francs a year on the decorations of their family vaults and chapels, in which oil is kept burning day and night in gold and silver lamps.

During the first days of the month the cemeteries and the roads leading to them are crowded with people. Even those who have no loved ones under the earth go out of curiosity to see the sight, and of late years it has become customary for persons to leave their writing cards on the graves of those whom they know in life. "This is to show the families of the dead that they are not forgotten."

On these days the church of bones is open free to the public. The steps leading

down to this chapel are of bones; the floor, the decorations and friezes on the walls and ceiling are also of bones; in a word, everything inside the place is of bone. It is marvellous, for the bones are so cleverly fitted into each other that not one is cut or in any way mutilated or changed in size or form. Therefore each bone retains its natural shape and the general effect is that the whole chapel is of carved ivory.

The subterranean cemetery of the Capuchin's church, near Piazza Barberini, is also interesting. It is reached by a narrow staircase and is formed of large, well lit caverns, of which the roof and walls are ornamented with human bones, which form designs of rosettes, garlands and even suspended chandeliers. The circumference of the caves is ornamented with ribs, symmetrically ranged and forming at intervals apocryphal niches like those of the Catacombs. There, in attitude of prayer or sleep, appear skeletons of monks, clothed in their coarse habit, with crucifix in hand and the hood drawn over the skull.

On the ceiling of one of the caves is fixed a skeleton which looks like a huge spider and which is said to be the skeleton of a Borghese princess, and in one of the last caves are the skeletons of two young princes, Barberini, holding up a crown. This work is attributed to a man who, to escape justice, took refuge within the precincts of the monastery about the end of the fifteenth century. Those monks were first buried, coffinless, in earth brought from Jerusalem. When visiting this coun-

try in company with the late Mr. Edward Rosewater he recommended me not to forget mentioning this curious spot in my "Side Lights." Another curious custom is that of eating broad beans, or imitations of them in sugar, or biscuit during this month in commemoration of the dead. This, like most Roman customs, dates from Pagan times, and has its origin in the ancients' superstitious fear (mixed with piety) of the dead. Neither ages nor Christianity has succeeded in eradicating this and other popular Roman customs.

Ancient Romans had also their commemoration of the dead. It was called Parentalia, because held by the family of the dead. Sacrifices and other honors were offered in the hope of rendering the souls of the dead friendly. Every year, therefore, the whole family went together to visit the sepulcher and there partook of a meal, composed of milk, apples, lentils, rye, eggs and beans. They imagined that the dead took a part in the banquet. And thus the custom of eating beans on All souls' day has descended to modern Rome, for when Pope Boniface IV instituted All Saints' day in November, A. D. 608, the Day of the Dead was changed from May to November, and dried beans were distributed to the poor on the occasion. Monks and nuns also, in their monasteries and convents, received a double portion of beans on this day. November has thus become the month of beans; not of fresh beans or dried beans, but beans luscious in biscuit, sugar, chocolate, etc.; and these are eaten by high and low, rich and poor, through the month, out of devotion, as Italians say. The windows of the confectioners' stores are now laden with a variety of sweets, of which also it is customary for Roman families to exchange presents. All this appears strange to foreigners, but Romans cling so tenaciously to the customs of their forefathers that they never fail to keep up their tradition, however strange these may appear to modern minds.

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"Indeed? Why do you say that?"

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Taken with these striking proofs of the growth of the motor car trade, the statement that the demand for machines is far ahead of the supply will cause no astonishment. Partly because of this condition, but chiefly because foreign makers still lead in the production of certain high-class and high-speed cars, the increase of the home output is accompanied by an in-

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