

# Baker

## Snapshot

**Career Cluster(s):** Business, Management & Administration; Hospitality & Tourism

**Interests:** Food; baked goods & desserts; baking; customer service

**Earnings (Yearly Average):** \$27,700

**Employment & Outlook:** Faster Than Average Growth Expected

## OVERVIEW

### Sphere of Work

Bakers mix ingredients according to recipes to make breads, pastries, and other baked goods. They may be employed at a grocery store, café, or manufacturing facility. Alternately, entrepreneurial bakers run their own cafés or bake shops.

### Work Environment

Bakers must follow daily production schedules to bake products in sufficient quantities while maintaining consistent quality. Depending on where a baker works, he or she might be required to work early mornings or late nights. Part-time work is also common. Bakers who own their own business may work long, irregular hours to maintain production while overseeing other business elements such as staffing, payroll, and inventory.

### Occupation Interest

Bakers are creative individuals who not only have a love for baked goods, but for the finely tuned process that goes into making those items. They are



Bakers preparing cupcakes for icing. Photo via iStock.com/xavierarnau. [Used under license.]

skilled in their craft and are excited to try new ideas and tools to bring customers the best baked goods possible. They monitor trends in the industry and on social media and try to stay with or ahead of the curve. They also enjoy interacting with customers when in a retail setting.

### **A Day in the Life—Duties and Responsibilities**

Bakers produce various types and quantities of breads, pastries, and other baked goods sold by grocers, wholesalers, restaurants, and institutional food services.

Commercial bakers, also called production bakers, work in manufacturing facilities that produce breads, pastries, and other baked products. In these facilities, bakers use high-volume mixing machines, ovens, and other equipment, which may be automated, to mass-produce standardized baked goods. They carefully follow instructions for production schedules and recipes.

Retail bakers work primarily in grocery stores and specialty shops, including bakeries. In these settings, they produce smaller quantities of baked goods for people to eat in the shop or for sale as specialty baked goods. Retail bakers may take orders from customers, prepare baked products to order, and occasionally serve customers. Although the quantities prepared and sold in these stores are often small, they usually come in a wide variety of flavors and sizes. Most retail bakers are also responsible for cleaning their work area and equipment and unloading supplies.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

- Checking the quality of baking ingredients
- Preparing equipment for baking
- Measuring or weighing ingredients
- Combining measured ingredients in mixers or blenders
- Kneading, rolling, cutting, and shaping dough
- Placing dough into pans, into molds, or onto baking sheets
- Setting oven temperatures and place items into ovens or onto grills

### **Profile**

**Interests:** Things, People

**Working Conditions:** Inside

**Physical Strength:** Medium Work, Heavy Work

**Education Needs:** On-the-Job Training, High School

Diploma with Technical Education,  
Junior/Technical/Community College, Apprenticeship

**Licensure/Certification:** Usually Not Required

**Opportunities for Experience:** Internship,  
Apprenticeship, Part-Time Work

**Interest Score:** RC

Some retail bakers own bakery shops where they make and sell breads, pastries, pies, and other baked goods. In addition to preparing the baked goods and overseeing the entire baking process, they are also responsible for hiring, training, and supervising their staff. They must budget for and order supplies, set prices, and decide how much to produce each day.

Grocery stores and restaurants sell freshly baked goods throughout the day. As a re-

sult, bakers are often scheduled to work shifts during early mornings, late evenings, weekends, and holidays. Bakers who work in commercial bakeries that bake continuously may have to work late evenings and weekends. Some bakers work part-time.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

### **Immediate Physical Environment**

The work can be stressful because bakers follow time-sensitive baking procedures and often work under strict deadlines. For example, bakers must follow daily production schedules to bake products in sufficient quantities while maintaining consistent quality. In manufacturing facilities, they often work with other production workers, such as helpers and maintenance staff, so that equipment is cleaned and ready.

Bakers are exposed to high temperatures when working around hot ovens. They stand for hours at a time while observing the baking process, making the dough, or cleaning the baking equipment. Bakeries, especially large manufacturing facilities, are filled with potential dangers such as hot ovens, mixing machines, and dough cutters. Bakers must take precautions to avoid injury.

Although their work is generally safe, bakers may endure back strains caused by lifting or moving heavy bags of flour or other products. Other common risks include cuts, scrapes, and burns. To reduce these risks, bakers often wear back supports, aprons, and gloves.

### **Human Environment**

Human interaction differs by duty. Some bakers may be involved solely in production, and, therefore, will be limited in contact to their coworkers and supervisors. Others who work in retail may interact with customers daily, taking special orders, and providing the finished product. Bakery owners deal with customers, staff, and suppliers, including resolving disputes.

### **Technological Environment**

Bakers must be adept at using all the tools of the trade in order to produce consistent, quality products, including large and powerful appliances such as mixers and ovens. They must be safety conscious to avoid injury. Ongoing on-the-job training may be required as new tools and equipment are introduced.

## EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND ADVANCEMENT

### High School/Secondary

No formal education is required to become a baker, but students wishing to attend postsecondary technical or culinary programs must have a high school diploma. Students should focus on math, science, and English courses, as well as courses such as accounting and economics if a long-term goal is to own a business. Seeking part-time work in the field is also beneficial, as is practicing home baking.

#### Suggested High School Subjects

- Accounting
- Algebra
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Civics
- Earth or Life or Physical Science
- Economics
- English
- Entrepreneurship
- Geography
- Geometry
- History
- Physics
- Psychology
- Statistics

#### Related Career Pathways/Majors

*Business, Management & Administration Career Cluster*

- General Management Pathway

*Hospitality & Tourism Administration Career Cluster*

- Restaurants & Food/Beverage Services Pathway

### Postsecondary

Although there are no formal education requirements to become a baker, some candidates attend a technical or culinary school. Programs generally last from 1 to 2 years and cover nutrition, food safety, and basic math. To enter these programs, candidates may be required to have a high school diploma or equivalent.

### Transferable Skills and Abilities

#### Communication Skills

- Dealing effectively with customers in a retail setting

#### Detail-oriented

- Monitoring products in the oven to keep them from burning
- Having an eye for detail because many pastries and cakes require intricate decorations

#### Math Skills

- Possessing basic math skills, especially knowledge of fractions, in order to precisely mix recipes, weigh ingredients, or adjust mixes.

#### Physical Stamina

- Standing for extended periods while preparing dough, monitoring baking, and packaging baked goods

#### Physical Strength

- Lifting and carrying heavy bags of flour and other ingredients, which may weigh up to 50 pounds

## Fast Fact

It doesn't take a degree to launch your own business: only about 44 percent of entrepreneurs have a college degree. Source: [whattobecome.com](http://whattobecome.com)



No degree necessary. Photo via iStock.com/Ivan-balvan. [Used under license.]

### Related College Majors

- Baking & Pastry Arts
- Culinary Arts
- Food Science
- Nutrition
- Professional Cooking

### Adult Job Seekers

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As no formal education is required to be a baker, adults with an interest in and a skill for baking stand a good chance of transitioning into the field. Coming from a related field such as culinary or baking supply sales is an asset. Coursework is recommended to become familiar with standard techniques and concepts such as food safety.

### Professional Certification and Licensure

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Certification is voluntary and shows that a baker has the skills and knowledge to work at a retail baking establishment.

The Retail Bakers of America (RBA) offers certification in four levels of competence, with a focus on several topics, including baking sanitation, management, retail sales, and staff training. Those who wish to become certified must satisfy a combination of education and experience requirements before taking an exam.

The education and experience requirements vary by the level of certification desired. For example, a Certified Journey Baker (CJB) requires no education but must have at least 1 year of work experience. A Certified Baker must have 4 years of work experience and 30 hours of sanitation coursework, and a Certified Master Baker (CMB) must have 8 years of work experience, 30 hours of sanitation coursework, and 30 hours of professional development education.

### Additional Requirements

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Most bakers learn their skills through long-term on-the-job training, typically lasting 1 to 3 years. Some employers may provide apprenticeship programs for aspiring bak-

ers. Bakers in specialty bakery shops and grocery stores often start as apprentices or trainees and learn the basics of baking, icing, and decorating. They usually study topics such as nutrition, sanitation procedures, and basic baking. Some participate in correspondence study and may work toward a certificate in baking.

Some bakers learn their skills through work experience related to baking. For example, they may start as a baker's assistant and progress into a full-fledged baker as they learn baking techniques.

## EARNINGS AND ADVANCEMENT

Earnings depend on many factors such as employer, location, and nature of work (i.e., retail or commercial). Median annual earnings of bakers were \$27,700 in 2019. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$20,310, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$41,640.

Bakers may receive paid vacations, holidays, and sick days; life and health insurance; and retirement benefits. These are usually paid by an employer if the business is not self-owned.

## EMPLOYMENT AND OUTLOOK

Bakers held 199,300 jobs in 2019. Six percent were self-employed. Employment is expected to grow faster than average for all occupations through the year 2029, at a rate of 5 percent. Population and income growth are expected to result in greater demand for specialty baked goods, such as cupcakes, pies, and cakes, from grocery stores, retail bakeries, and restaurants. However, employment of bakers in food manufacturing may be limited as these facilities increasingly use automated machines and equipment to mass-produce baked goods.

Job opportunities are expected to be good because of the need to replace workers who leave the occupation every year.

### Related Occupations

- Chef/Head Cook
- Cook
- Food/Tobacco Processing Worker
- Food Preparation Worker

## MORE INFORMATION

### **AIB International**

P.O. Box 3999  
1213 Bakers Way  
Manhattan, KS 66505-3999  
[www.aibinternational.com](http://www.aibinternational.com)

### **American Bakers Association (ABA)**

601 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 230  
Washington, DC 20004  
202.789.0300  
[info@AmericanBakers.org](mailto:info@AmericanBakers.org)  
[americanbakers.org](http://americanbakers.org)

### **Cookie and Snack Bakers Association (CASBA)**

[jnewell@batoryfoods.com](mailto:jnewell@batoryfoods.com)  
[mike@aecdierolls.com](mailto:mike@aecdierolls.com)  
[casba.us](http://casba.us)

### **Home Baking Association (HBA)**

2931 SW Gainsboro Road  
Topeka, KS 66614-4413  
785.478.3283  
[hbapatton@aol.com](mailto:hbapatton@aol.com)  
[www.homebaking.org](http://www.homebaking.org)

### **Independent Bakers Association (IBA)**

316 F Street NE, Suite 206  
Washington, DC 20002  
202.333.8190  
[www.ibabaker.com/](http://www.ibabaker.com/)

### **International Dairy Deli Bakery Association (IDDBA)**

8317 Elderberry Road  
Madison, WI 53717-2603  
608.310.5000  
[iddba@iddba.org](mailto:iddba@iddba.org)  
[www.iddba.org](http://www.iddba.org)

**Retail Bakers of America (RBA)**

15941 S Harlem Avenue, Suite 347

Tinley Park, IL 60477

800.638.0924

info@retailbakersofamerica.org

retailbakersofamerica.org

**RPIA Group**

P.O. Box 803

Westfield, IN 46074

800.746.6551

rick.crawford@rpiausa.org

www.rpiausa.org

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*Stuart Paterson*