# *A (Possible) Day in the Life of the Kitchen Director*

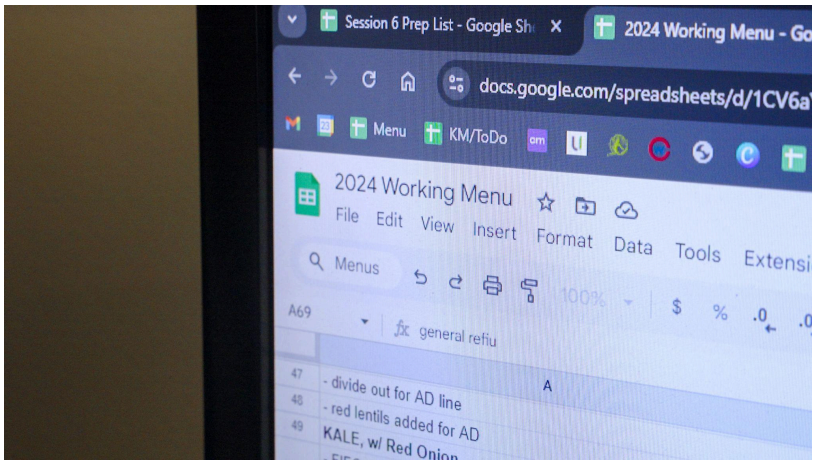
The role of the Kitchen Director ("KD" / "Executive Chef") varies on a daily basis. Adaptability, multitasking, interpersonal management, administrative work, and problem solving are only a few of the skills that a day may present as necessary… and that's not even touching on the actual food part of the work! That being said, this document will hopefully provide a sense of what one might expect, though is admittedly incomplete due to the ever-changing reality of this work and Augusta as a whole.

Variables which may affect the KD role include, but are not limited to: day of the week, session of the summer, orders to be made and/or received, the needs of Camp or Programming at large, the needs of the physical kitchen (equipment, facilities, etc), and the needs of the kitchen staff (training, illness, interpersonal relationships, individual development), and more. It is the Kitchen Director's responsibility to attend to tasks as they come up, prioritizing and delegating them as appropriate, while still achieving the basic requirement of a successful operation: *feeding all guests safe, flavorful, and healthy food - three times a day, every day.*

Below are a number of tasks that may present themselves to the Kitchen Director on any given day - and are to be attended to with consideration of priority and time restraints.

## Pre-Season (+ Off-Season)

*[mid-April through mid-May]*




- **Menu Creation**: Use successful menus and recipes from previous years to adapt/add delicious entrees, side dishes, desserts, dressings, sauces, etc. for Camp Augusta's main season, family camps, and school groups. Staff Training (May) is a good time to test run new recipes/ideas!
- **Menu Planning**: Arrange meals in line with Food Guidelines for pre-season and main season. See example menus here.
- **Budgeting:** Connect with the Bookkeeper (and Executive Director) to confirm budgets for each part of the summer and begin ordering with these numbers in mind. Seek out opportunities for donations and cutting costs with bulk purchases or vendor deals/promotions. Connect with vendor representatives, ensuring accounts are active and ready for placing orders after 5+ months in dormancy.
- **Hiring:** If possible, be involved with the hiring process: Posting flyers locally, checking online job boards for potential fits, interviewing, hiring, and sending information to new staff, ie: staff manuals and onboarding information. Some years, the focus is on temporary hires before the main staff has arrived!
- **Ordering:** Get kitchen stocked: Inventory/Ordering of small wares (plates, bowls, etc), non-food and janitorial supplies, food staples (spices, oils), equipment maintenance, and eventually; food!
- **Onboarding:** Complete personal requirements for job and expectations from Augusta: paperwork, training, staff bio, philosophy work, certifications, insurance, etc.

- **Staff Training:** Plan schedule, decide on information to be imparted and create lesson plans. Get fellow leadership/managers and various program staff on board to help instruct. Consult with the Director, and others, about how to ensure kitchen staff can attend staff training sessions.

# Main Season

## Communication

- **Kitchen Program Coordination:** Receive information for coming Cabin Activities and Picnics for all Cabins from Village Leader(s). Once info is received, incorporate it onto the proposed menu for the week and communicate the additions to staff. Share with a designated kitchen staff member (likely a returner and/or manager) who will oversee the logistics of these additional programs.
- **Allergies + Alternative Diets:** Review camper allergies within the current session, sharing all info with the Alternative Diet Chef and Manager(s). Confirm the severity of said allergies by calling the parents or referring to files on CampMinder, adjust the menu accordingly. *Example: Let's say Tyler has a severe allergy to tree nuts. It is so severe that he can not be around another person who has eaten a granola that has them within, you will then need to pull <u>any</u> ingredients in the inventory that may present a similar threat.* Inform Kitchen Staff accordingly by posting an Alternative Diet List (which includes all allergies) and verbally communicate with all kitchen staff as to the preventative steps they need to take for safety.
    - Ensure an Alternative Diet List is prepared, shared with the whole team, and all staff is informed about how to accommodate these needs of campers/staff in the week(s) to come.
- **Birthdays:** Get a list of birthdays for the session from the office, or learn how to procure this information independently via CampMinder. Post and communicate these with the kitchen staff, filling them in on the menu. Ensure that a special treat + candle will be made available for camper(s).
    - Connect with Village Leaders about birthdays in their village on day-of, or during check-in.
- **Meal Guidelines:** When the children arrive the first night, before they are served seconds/dessert, it is the Kitchen's responsibility to go over the basic rules of the dining area and meals. Covering the basic outlines of food waste, the alternative diet line, cleaning up after yourself, and seconds are key.
    - You may also mention the process for receiving dessert and the option for kitchen-adjacent Cabin Activities. This process can be a quick and clear announcement or a full skit with staff involvement… have fun with it! (Keep in mind, kids get a LOT of new info this day.)
- **Daily all-kitchen meetings:** Hold these meetings daily for at least the first month to iron out any communication needs and continue at least four times a week for the rest of the season. These are essential for the continual evolution of kitchen processes and healthy communication. Connect with staff about non-work things here as well - group health is beyond work too!

## Food

- **Training Staff:** Make sure that you have trained all Kitchen Staff in the roles in the kitchen, including the most basic knife and cooking skills and ranging into more complex development.

- **Inventory:** Use the Inventory Doc in Ordering File. Check to see what food/supplies are necessary to provide ingredients for the week until the following order arrives.
- **Ordering:** Depending on the vendors used, orders may need to be placed on a daily basis. Streamlining this reality will be your key to success and sustainability. Using local vendors has a variety of perks, and often comes with downfalls as well. Larger vendors may be able to provide more variety, but also come with their own challenges. Communicating with vendor reps about our unique environment and needs will benefit your process greatly. It is vital that you speak to reps *directly*, for best possible information.
    - While online portals or apps may be offered, and seem easier to navigate, nothing will be as helpful as cultivating connections with sale representatives directly. This is especially true during holiday weekends, changes in need, or unpredictable emergencies/challenges.
        - *In 2025, UNFI shut down for weeks, it was only the connection to our sales reps at other companies/vendors which allowed for a nearly seamless adjustment!*
- **Receiving:** Kitchen Director or Manager, or a trained staff member, is present when an order arrives, checking it to ensure all products are free of damage, rot, or mislabeling and have actually arrived. If some products have not arrived or are in poor condition, the Director or Manager makes plans to combat the issue ie; going to town, changing the menu, subbing in different ingredients. Reaching out to vendors for credits is a must and reaching out to local stores can often create ease for replacing such items. Order is put away as soon as possible.
  Food is replenished/restocked in the dry storage room, freezers and walk-in are reorganized to fit the new order. Follow the golden kitchen rule of FIFO: First In, First Out.



- **Food Stats:** Manager records all food used and leftover during the course of the day. This is shared daily for use in subsequent meals/sessions/years. Adjustments are made with average age and quantity of quests in a given week. Leftovers are incorporated into the coming meals as possible, as part of our zero waste goal.

# Maintenance

- **Health Code:** Meeting standards and expectations throughout the season, always.
- **General Cleanliness:** Storage rooms are kept clean, surfaces and sinks are clean, floors are swept, compost is covered and emptied regularly, pest prevention is kept in high consideration.
- **Temperate Logs are kept:** Check all the refrigerators and freezers twice a day especially during the hot days of summer. If the freezer or walk-in is running hot, monitor the temperature and the amount of time it stays in a danger zone, making amends if need be. Because we use these spaces often before, during,

and after meal time, the temperatures tend to fluctuate. This is normal, but you need to make sure that they return to proper temps or make other plans if repairs are needed.

- **Cleaning:** General oversight, and active participation as needed, in daily/weekly cleaning operations. At the end of each meal, the kitchen completes the necessary cleaning, inside and out, before leaving. At the end of session (Saturdays), after the children are fed breakfast, the kitchen crew completes their Weekly Cleaning Tasks and provides a more thorough cleaning of specific areas (dish rooms, walk-in, etc.)




- **Equipment Inspection:** Equipment is regularly inspected to ensure it is all in working order, repairs are planned as needed, whether with the onsite maintenance crew or with professionals who can service our needs directly.

# Individual Development & Mentorship!

- **Personal Check-ins:** Regularly check ins with kitchen staff on both a personal and professional level to ensure their well-being and address any concerns. Offer a supportive, open-door approach to foster a positive and communicative work environment. Work with the Wellness Counselor to ensure staff are able to seek professional support as needed/desired - including yourself!
- **Professional Development:** Provide structured training (e.g. pairing with another staff, or coaching from you) for staff to improve their culinary skills and knowledge. Offer pointers in kitchen life day to day with your experience. Acknowledge that not all kitchen staff will be specifically passionate about food work/service, so find the elements within that spark their individual interests and skills.
- **Encouragement and Motivation:** Recognize and celebrate staff accomplishments, both big and small. Offer positive reinforcement to build morale, boost confidence, and maintain a motivated team atmosphere throughout the season. Constructive feedback may be successful too!
- **Conflict Management and Resolution:** Address any interpersonal issues or conflicts within the kitchen promptly. Take a proactive approach by mediating discussions, listening to all parties, and working toward fair and constructive solutions that promote team cohesion.
- **Mid-Summer and End of Summer Evaluations:** Conduct formal evaluations with each kitchen team member at both mid-summer and end-of-summer points. Provide



constructive feedback, set development goals, and discuss areas for growth and improvement.

- **Providing Direct, Supportive Feedback:** Offer clear, constructive feedback in a timely manner. Provide guidance on how to improve performance while maintaining a supportive and empathetic tone. Encourage staff to ask questions and seek clarification when needed.
- **Formal Evaluations**: Two or three times over the course of the summer, sit down with each kitchen staff and go through a formal evaluation process with created rubrics.

# Pests:

- **Pests:** Pest preventative measures are repetitively renewed throughout the year and updated in frequency or intensity as needed. Consistent and reliable service, like that from EcoLab, is planned for and considered as soon as possible to ensure pests do not become an issue. Food waste is cleaned up properly and with haste to avoid larger invaders (rodents, skunks, bears) as well.

## And much, much more…!

And don't forget to enjoy the people and nature, have fun.
You work at summer camp!