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Welcome to

FIRE ISLAND

➤ RUSTIC BAKESHOP ➤

anchorage, alaska

Est. 2009



Employee Handbook

Welcome to the Fire Island Family!

Before you dive into the rest of the handbook we'd like you to read [this](#) article published by Bon Appetit. We believe that it captures the heart and vision of our bakery perfectly.

It is our belief that no matter what your position is at the bakery, everyone is treated with the utmost **kindness and respect**. We believe that much of our success is due to our treatment towards one another, each and every vendor, customer, and community member that passes through our doors. We strive to be the best part of someone's day, to engage with them and to connect people with their food and community.

Company History

Fire Island Rustic Bakeshop was dreamt up in Jerry and Janis' home kitchen where Jerry broke two expensive home ovens. His time with Alaska State Parks was coming to a close, and he decided upon retirement that he would enroll in the esteemed San Francisco Baking Institute for their professional bread and pastry program.

Upon completing the SFBI program, Jerry and Janis traveled the highways of America for one full summer (since Janis was due back to her high school in the fall). They visited over 100 bakeries to see what they liked and didn't like about bakery culture in the United States. They took notes and pictures and started to create their vision for an artisan bakery to be opened in their hometown of Anchorage, Alaska.

In 2009, they found a space they wanted to lease and decided to incorporate as an LLC to open a small family bakery. The building was embedded in a neighborhood, which was a fortunate find since Anchorage has very little mixed zoning. The neighborhood feel has become a cornerstone for our business and is teamed with an engaging experience for each customer who visits our bakery. They designed the kitchen with completely visible workspaces, with either display space or tables around these spaces, allowing customers to watch bakers perform their craft; creating delicious and creative baked fare.

Fire Island Rustic Bakeshop officially opened in February of 2009 and the business simply took off. It was, apparently, just what Anchorage had been thirsting for. It was a family business from the get-go. Jerry's second oldest daughter Greta and her partner Jason, were Fire Island's first production bakers; and Janis' son Josh and his partner Tess were the masterminds behind the Fire Island brand. Their youngest daughter, Rachel, started as a baker in 2010, and in 2012 became a partner in the business. She now manages the bakeries, does the hiring and staffing, and leads our team of kitchen and department managers.

At this time Erica Merrill and Harrison Scheib are our two talented, kind, thoughtful and driven General Managers. Erica has been with Fire Island for 10 years, starting as a cleaner, counter gal, sandwich maker, cake queen, location manager and mother to all of Fire Island. She leads with respect for everyone, lending her wealth of experience in each department to drive forward our mission and hit our goal. Harrison started at the bakery in 2014 and worked on our bread team, developing artisan breads and elevating the bread program. He left the bakery in 2016 to help grow and manage bakeries in Bend, Oregon, returning in 2022 to lead our team as we opened a new location and further promoted top tier baking and high end methodology to make, bake, and sell the best possible bread and baked goods in the State. Together, Fire Island's management team works to uphold our values and business ethics; connecting people with their food and community, and creating a safe and fun workplace for our many employees to grow both personally and professionally.

We came to understand our niche, and we drafted manuals and documents to allow us to focus our talent and energy on what we did best: offering Anchorage an immersive experience where customers could choose from the finest, high quality baked goods in the state.

In 2015, Fire Island was 5 years old and it became apparent that our thriving business was bursting at the seams. We had an average of 500 transactions each day and we had to expand our baking schedule to 6 days a week; an average of 11 hours a day. We experienced long lines for hours on end and were often unable to keep up with demand (which we viewed as a good thing). We started to look for a second location where we could sell and produce the same high quality baked goods in a bi-located market by sharing resources between the bakeries. We also made the decision that we wanted to own our own facility. We aimed to emulate our current model of operation by being embedded in a residential neighborhood.

In October of '15, we opened our second bakery, located in the Airport Heights neighborhood. Just a few months later, in May of 2016, we expanded our original bakery to become nearly twice as big in order to better accommodate families, larger groups and increase our performance-based kitchen space.

Another expansion happened in the summer of 2018, when we opened a third location in south Anchorage. This third shop included a state of the art deck oven and allowed us to increase our bread production and better serve our southside customers! This location was hugely successful and was highly operational for 4 years, until July of 2022.

We then found another space downtown to secure our baking dreams. 718 K street was a redevelopment project that took shape in 2022. We asked multiple other businesses to co-locate with us. The 10,000 square foot building was divided up into 5 distinct spaces: La Bodega Wine and Spirits, That Feeling Co selling plants and espresso, Johnnys produce

Our Beliefs

We believe in great food and even better customer service.

When someone walks in our door we want them to feel happy and appreciated. It is everyone's responsibility to make eye contact with customers, acknowledge their presence, and verbally engage with them. It is important to us that our staff go the extra mile, which often means remembering individuals' names, helping them out to their car, or asking about their family and recent adventures.

This is a family business and we want it to feel like a comfortable and familial environment where people are safe and loved.

In using this business as a vehicle for change, we encourage others to employ ethical and intentional policies and practices, and push our vendors to offer more local, seasonal, ethical and sustainable food options.

We also believe in providing great food with high quality ingredients that are traditionally prepared and baked. Our products are predominantly organic and are sourced as close to home as possible. That's why they're so yummy.

Also, we really like working with people that do interesting stuff and are fun to be around. It makes us happy. We aim to create a dynamic workplace that empowers our employees and delights our customers.

The customer experience...

We believe the customer is ALWAYS right. No matter what, excellent customer service will always be our ultimate goal. We strive to never let someone leave our shop unhappy. Every employee at Fire Island has the power to right a wrong or turn around a customer's experience. Go the extra mile. Statistically people don't share their experience if it is a positive one, but they will tell at least 5-10 people if they've had a negative experience. We rely on word of mouth to build our reputation, so it is really important to us that everyone has only great things to say. When dealing with a disappointed customer, sincerely apologize to them and acknowledge their frustration or dissatisfaction. Ask them if they would like to try a different product at no cost, offer a refund, or give them a gift card.

Please be mindful of our customers at all times as an employee of Fire Island. A customer entering the shop should never wait at the counter without a greeting from one of our staff. We strive to put our customers first. Greeting and taking care of them comes before product, dishes, and restocking.

OVER THE TOP GUARANTEE

We are incredibly passionate about your experience at Fire Island. If you are ever less than delighted with our products, customer service, or a special order, please let us know. Whether it was minutes or years ago, give us the opportunity to make things right. No proof or returns necessary. We would like to make your day because that's what makes ours.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I park?

Onsite parking is reserved for patrons to our businesses.

There is free parking along the parkstrip which is a few short blocks away as well as limited free street parking in the neighborhood to the west of L st.

Saturdays and Sundays street parking and the health department lot are free.

Discounted passes for people that work downtown can be purchased through Anchorage Parking Authority. You can purchase a parking pass for the lot on 6th and L for 60.00 a month.

At airport heights bakery: Airport Heights Elementary School parking lot is available on weekends and all summer. After May 23rd, you can park here all week until school reopens in August. There is a parking lot off of 16th .

Trinity Christian Reform Church and Anchor Park United Methodist: For Wednesday-Friday parking thru May 23rd, you can park at either church (in squares in the map). When parking at the churches, please use the spots around the perimeter so church members have the parking close to the entrance.

Please no street parking, we want to be good neighbors. Thanks!

Anyone working an early morning shift is allowed to park as close as they desire, with the understanding that they must move their vehicle at 7am, or close to it when they have a natural break in production. For safety's sake, parking in an adjacent lot is encouraged, and moving your vehicle later in the morning/when it is lighter out, is allowed.

Fire Island does not provide employee parking and is your responsibility.

Where can I store my things?

K Street: We have a locker room with shared lockers and hooks where you are welcome to store your belongings. We do not lock the doors or the lockers so please be mindful of valuables that you are bringing to work.

Airport Heights: Upstairs in the break room we have baskets for storing your things.

We do not lock the doors or the lockers so please be mindful of valuables that you are bringing to work. Once you have stored your personal things and are ready to work, head up front and clock in on one of our ipads.

How should I address my coworkers?

First name basis. We love using first names here. If a customer asks a question please avoid saying things like “(s)he’ll be with you...” Use their first name. We want to keep an ‘everybody knows your name’ vibe around here.

When do I get paid?

Every other week on Friday. You’ll be paid via direct deposit in whatever account you set up with Gusto - our payroll service.

Do I get a discount on food and products?

We love being able to provide people with great food at affordable prices. Our products are all super high quality and we want you to try a huge variety of items during your time here. At 4pm, when the bakery is closed, any current employee is able to take home a loaf of bread that can’t be sold the following morning. Please note that we donate to many different non-profit organizations throughout our community, which is where the bulk of our unsold product goes at the end of each day. It is our goal to drain out of product throughout the afternoon to limit the amount of waste we’re left with at the end of the day. Know that any leftovers we do have are donated to local food banks and missions so we ask that you take home only what you will use for yourself and not to bring to friends and family.

During your shift, you are welcome to buy something to eat during your break at a discount of 50%. If you would like to buy a product to take home with you, we offer a 25% discount. This discount applies to everything except retail items.

What if I am hungry while I am working?

Food should not be eaten while in the kitchen. Please find an appropriate place to take a break and fill your tummies. To be in compliance with State and Federal health code, staff must wash hands before returning to help customers.

Texting, love it or hate it?

Love it! We are really great at communicating via text. The use of phones during work hours is acceptable *only as long* as it pertains to work (i.e. timing, communicating with each other or our other locations) but please limit personal use of phones to break times. Do not let texting ever interfere with giving great service. The customer in the shop comes before product *and* phone communication.

When can I take a break?

Your break should happen when we're not extra busy and when it won't inconvenience your coworkers. Take your break sometime in the middle of your shift. Please check in with your coworkers or the kitchen manager so that people know that you will be away from the counter. Breaks are generally paid for 10 minutes to 15 minutes. If you are anticipating a longer break than that, we ask that you clock out. (Per Alaska Law a minor scheduled to work 6 consecutive hours is entitled to a 30 minute break. The break must be taken within the first 5 hours of your shift. Please clock out for these longer breaks) For adults over the age of 18 we may have to ask you to come back to work early if the front gets busy. The lines can be unpredictable. At K St., we have a break room, but it is shared with the other businesses in the building so please be respectful. At Airport Heights, you are welcome to break in the annex, outside in the courtyard or your vehicle. Please be mindful that breaks should not detract from your co-worker's ability to focus and do their jobs and clean up after yourself.

According to Alaska Labor and Wage Law: Alaskan employers are not required to provide breaks for employees 18 and over. If your employer allows breaks, and they last less than 20 minutes, you must be paid for the break (no clocking out).

Who does dishes?

You do, I do, we all do.

Bakers are expected to move their dishes all the way through from start to finish in a timely manner. Our counter staff is responsible for all customer dishes and sheet pans. During slow times on the counter, it is also appropriate to check the dish pit for any dishes that need to be done or put away. If we all pitch in, we'll keep our bakery sparkling!

NUTS AND BOLTS

Food Handlers Card

As required by the municipality of Anchorage, it is mandatory that every staff member obtain a Food Handler's Card. The certification is \$10 and can be accessed at [Alternate Food Worker Testing - Anchorage](#). Make sure to use this web address as a general Google search of food handlers cards can lead you to the wrong one.

You have 30 days from your date of hire to complete this training but we ask that you do it ASAP once you've been hired. Once complete, email your certificate to fireislandbread@gmail.com. We ask that you also take a picture of it on your phone so that you always have a copy on hand. The certification must be on file within the first month of employment for future shifts to be scheduled. Your certificate is valid for 3 years and must be kept current to continue uninterrupted employment.

Gusto/Payroll

Fire Island issues paychecks every other week on Friday. Pay periods are two weeks and run Monday through Sunday. Our payroll service is online with a company called Gusto. Through Gusto, you will enter your banking information and complete your W4 for tax purposes. You will create a personal profile with 24/7 online access to update things like address, payment, tax withholdings or deductions, etc. This is also where you can see past pay stubs.

When I Work

Upon being hired you will receive an emailed invitation to download an app called When I Work. This is our scheduling and clock in/out platform. With WIW you will be prompted to accept upcoming shifts for the week, get notifications for Open Shifts that are available, and request time off. You will also get reminders to clock in and out of your shifts. It is the staff's responsibility to know their schedule. Changes to the schedule may be made up till Sunday of the week before without confirmation from staff, in accordance with their availability.

Slack

Since we live in a world of smartphones we are taking advantage of this opportunity to communicate with our large staff all at once. NEATO! You will need to download the app

on your device and set up a profile. We ask that you keep your notifications turned on as you will receive important announcements regarding the upcoming week, changes to product, special orders, etc.

Sensitivity Training

As part of our standard onboarding, every Fire Island employee is required to take a 75ish minute sexual harassment prevention training from the state of California. Please take the (free) course and print out the certificate at the end of the program. Shoot a picture to Rachel. It is a worthwhile training, and everyone can learn at least a few good things. The more we work towards a safe, friendly, and respectful workplace, the more sure we are that we will achieve it. It is not paid and is expected as a prerequisite for joining the fire island team.

[SB 1343 Employee English v16](#)

Dress Code

A huge part of the customer's food experience has to do with presentation. We all take part in this. Our goal is always to give the best experience possible. To make this happen, every single person contributes. We want you to take pride and ownership in the process. These are your muffins, your scones, your bread, your cakes. Think about presenting your products to the customers by considering not only the beautiful croissant or sandwich, but also about how we present ourselves. Your appearance should reflect the meticulous nature, sophistication, pride, and personality of our business. How does this change your thought process in getting ready for the job? Here are some guidelines to help:

COUNTER

Tops: Sleeved, knit shirt or blouse, free of wrinkles, stains, holes or writing/logos.

Hair: Clean and completely pulled back neatly; no loose hair. Hair should not be able to swing into products. Hair in our food is absolutely detrimental to our business. Period.

Bottoms: Slacks, skirts (keep professional length), nice jeans free of rips/stains. No sweatpants please.

Shoes: Need to be closed toe, slip free, professional looking. Socks are a must. No outdoor boots.

Jewelry: Modest, nothing dangling or with fur/feathers. None of your jewelry should be in danger of falling into the product.

Apron: Clean and wrinkle free. Change as needed. Make sure the neck strap is tucked behind collar.

Piercings and makeup: Modest and classy.

Smell: Clean and unscented, no perfume, cologne, scented lotions, or essential oils. These smells distract from the incredible aromas from our fresh baked products.

Fingernails: Nails should be trimmed and clean.

BAKERS

Hygiene is paramount when it comes to working with food. Please look above for the guidelines on hair, nails, and smell.

We ask that our bakers wear professional black pants (no leggings), a black headband or hat, black non-slip shoes, and a clean chef coat and apron. Bakers will be provided aprons to be changed out whenever needed.

Note on skin exposure. Midsection exposure is a total buzzkill. Make sure your top is long enough and pants are high enough to cover your waistline when performing normal workplace tasks.

We love pets! However, that enthusiasm doesn't extend to pet hair. Any hair clinging to clothes is in danger of ending up in our products; an incident we take all measures to avoid. Please use provided lint rollers to ensure we don't bring any pet hair into the bakery.

SPECIAL special orders

Always check with the baker responsible for the product to fulfill a special S/O.

Ask the customer for a phone number so that we can check with the appropriate person/people if they are not immediately available and politely ask the customer to look for a return call. We will try to fulfill special S/O, but we strive to never disappoint.

Special diets/allergies

First and foremost this is a cozy facility and by cozy we mean small. We can never guarantee an item is completely free of nuts, dairy, or flour, etc. We try our very best to not cross contaminate allergens. But customers with a severe allergy (anaphylactic shock) need to know that this is not always entirely possible. We do not have separate baking equipment. If you are unsure if a product contains an allergen, please check with the baker responsible for that product.

Packaging

A thoughtfully wrapped package or a neatly packed box can really showcase a product and ensure that it arrives at its destination looking as beautiful as when it left our bakery. Find out what the customer would like and use the appropriate bag/box. This is a great way to engage in conversation and find out where their baked goods are heading. When appropriate, add a ribbon or a birthday candle to really make it a special experience. Like our ingredients, our packaging is sustainable, high quality and costly. Keep this in mind when sending orders out of our bakeries.

Chatting...

Please know that we only hire smart, kind, interesting people and they do cool stuff in their time out of the bakery. However, chatting can easily become problematic, so be conscientious of your surroundings and the appropriateness of the topic. Asking your co-workers how they are is very encouraged, but asking about their weekend and engaging in a longer conversation with phone pictures or more than one minute worth of details is not (unless you are both off the clock, and out of the kitchens). When a customer enters, please cease your conversations and/or tasks and immediately acknowledge them. We don't ever want to provide the image of laziness or carelessness, we work extremely hard and care so much it's often to the point of obsession. Make sure you are making every customer feel special and go the extra mile to make their experience great.

OUR FOOD

We believe that it is vital for Fire Island employees to be well-versed in our ingredients and baking methods. You should be able to speak confidently and knowledgeably on both of these topics. We don't expect you to gain this overnight, so it's important to continue to ask questions, observe bakers and experienced counter staff, and familiarize yourself with our website.

We have spent countless hours sourcing our ingredients and intentionally choosing partners. The vendors below all share in our vision for a sustainable and ethical business model.

[Central Milling](#)

The majority of our organic wheat flour comes from [Central Milling](#) in Logan, Utah. Their mill is powered from electricity generated by their own water turbine.

[VanderWeele Farms](#)

We also use Alaskan grains, in an effort to decrease our carbon footprint and to support local farmers. Ben VanderWeele of [VanderWeele Farms](#), in Palmer, Alaska has been supplies us with Alaskan Rye, and Hard Red Wheat.

[Camas Country Mill](#) in Eugene, Oregon was the first mill of their kind to operate in the Willamette Valley in nearly eighty years. Tom Hunton and his family grow, harvest, and mill organic grains all on site. We started sourcing beautiful single origin whole grains and flours from the Hunton's in 2023.

[Cairnsprings Mill](#) in Burlington, Washington is growing incredible whole grains in the beautiful Skagit Valley. Kevin Morse and his team are putting the local farmer first, and preserving the unique agricultural heritage of the Skagit Valley. We started sourcing Cairnsprings flour in 2023.

[Arctic Organics](#)

This local farm in Palmer provides us with fresh greens, herbs, and a variety of beautiful vegetables throughout Alaska's summer months. The rest of the year it steadily supplies us with its heartier winter vegetables: turnips, beets, carrots, potatoes, cabbage, and kohlrabi. River and Sarah Bean, owners and operators of [Arctic Organics](#), are stewards of the land. They were among the pioneers of organic farming in Alaska and are helping to create policy and practices for future farmers.

During the long, dark winter months, we buy fresh greens and basil through [Seeds of Change](#) here in Anchorage. They grow indoor hydroponics all year!

[Capriccio Specialties](#)

We have the greatest mushroom guy you could ask for. Paul Benson at [Capriccio Specialties](#) brings us the most delicious fungus. During Summer and Fall, he forages in his top secret spots nearby in Girdwood for wild mushrooms, fiddleheads, and devil's club shoots.

Other Vendors

Summit Spice and Tea
La Bodega Wine and Spirits
Sitka Salt Company
Arctic Harvest Deliveries
Linford of Alaska
Glory Bee

Alaskan Green Products

Mat Valley Meats

Nicky Meats USA

Favco Seafood