

# Life on Board for a Chef

Rahul Bhalekar\*, Sairaj Nazare\*\*

## Abstract

The cruise line industry is a developing industry which has its own work culture and requirements when it comes to employment unlike the other sectors of the hospitality industry. It has its advantages as well as disadvantages like the other industry do. Previously it was the requirement to have a good experience of working with star hotels or with the well-reputed dining establishments but with the development in the technology and the increased demand for the manpower, the companies changed their strategies for hiring and started employing the fresher's having formal culinary education. This paper is an effort to let students of the culinary institutions understand the requirements and procedure to opt for cruise line industry jobs with a fewer perception and more of the realistic information.

**Keywords:** Cruise Industry, On Board Chef, Chef Life, Cruise Liner, Cruise Line Work Structure, Cruise Hierarchy, Life on Board for a Chef

## INTRODUCTION

Cruise industry is a multi-billion dollars a year industry that keeps growing. Job opportunities are plentiful; the cruise line industry offers an enormous amount of employment especially to those in the hotel and restaurant industry. Besides the financial rewards, the opportunity to visit many unforgettable and exciting places around the world makes working on a cruise ship an experience of a lifetime.

Men and women who work on cruise ships are some of the most hard-working known people in the hospitality industry. The average work hours are approximately 10 hours. The contract could range between 4 to 9 months depending upon the position the person is holding in the hierarchy. It is a rewarding experience where cooks can learn new culinary skills working with latest equipment,

best quality food ingredients and standard operating procedures. Also, they get an opportunity to work with different nationalities which introduces them with their cultures and cuisine as well, it is a great enriching experience in itself

Candidates who seek employment on the cruise liners should possess a culinary degree from a culinary school/college and should have 3 to 5 years of experience in well-established hotel/restaurant. Now a day's cruise liner companies are giving a chance to hospitality fresher as well who are just graduated from culinary school/college.

Although it may sound glamorous to work on a cruise ship as a chef travelling the world, it is a challenging and demanding role. The chefs are responsible for delivering an exceptionally high level of food production in terms of variety, taste and most importantly hygiene; both personnel and food. Chefs or all the other crew members are often on their own, working in a confined space and away from their home and family for months..... sailing through oceans with endangering their lives as its just deep water all around.

On the other hand, it is a fulfilling and rewarding career, with the opportunity to travel to many far-flung locations across the globe. The ideal cruise chef candidate will be organized, focused and able to do multi-tasking and work under pressure to deliver food of the highest standards for the cruising passengers so that they can cherish the memories for their lifetime, as for most of the travelers cruising to different and attractive shores is one of the best moments of their life.

The challenge for any chef is to create the most sensational and interesting menu for the guests. Most of the clients accustomed to dining in some of the world's finest outlets and therefore they have high expectations and demand for the best. Executive Chefs work closely with the corporate team to design a menu which impresses and also caters to

\* Assistant Professor, Food Production Department, All India Shri Shivaji Memorial Society's College of Hotel Management & Catering Technology, Pune, Maharashtra, India. Email: [bhalekar.rahul@gmail.com](mailto:bhalekar.rahul@gmail.com)

\*\* Student, All India Shri Shivaji Memorial Society's College of Hotel Management & Catering Technology, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

any particular needs or dietary requirements of the guests. Since the cruise liners provide entertainment as well the menu offered needs to be in sync with it. The most critical part is the availability of the fresh ingredients as there are limitations due to their supply and storage on board.

The chef is also responsible for the food of on board crew it is his/her responsibility to provide the crew with appetizing and nourishing meals to sustain them through a long and tiring day of work. The crew food is planned with additions considering the different nationalities working on board the vessel.

The food production/chefs team needs to keep one thing in their mind that the crew members who are working with them are like their family members and are also working incredibly long hours and need a good feed at the end of each day. This feeling of being one of the members of that floating family is nurtured and encouraged in the sailors from day one when they step in the first time on a cruise ship. Meals for crew members tend to be of a simpler, nutritious, homely style than the haute cuisine that the guests will enjoy.

Salaries for the culinary staff on the cruise liners will vary according to the number of factors including the person's experience, the skills required, the nationality of the crew member, the passenger-carrying capacity of the cruise ship etc it could range from \$800 - \$3000. Head chef salaries can range from \$9,500 to \$12,000 per month.

## C-1/D Visa

The C-1/D transit/crewmember visa is a combination of two **visas** for those who have to board a ship or an airplane as crew members for normal operations and services, and also require transiting the U.S. to get to the ship or the aircraft they will join.

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Examples of personnel who can apply for such a visa are:

- Pilot or Flight Attendant on a Commercial/Passenger Airplane.
- Captain, Engineer, or Deckhand on a Sea Vessel.
- Lifeguard, Cook, Waiter, Beautician, or other Service Staff on a Cruise Ship.
- Trainee on board a Training Vessel.
- Complete the DS-160 online application and print the confirmation page (to bring to the interview).
- Create an account on this website.
- Pay the non-refundable MRV fee online.
- Schedule an interview appointment with a consular office.
- Attend your interview appointment and bring all pertinent documentation:
  - Confirmation page of form DS-160.
  - Valid passport.
  - One passport size photo for each visa applicant, including infants.
  - Employment contract and a letter (original) from the employer on letterhead identifying the crew member and describing in detail the nature and function of the position.
  - Documentation that demonstrates social, economic, and family ties to Italy. Such documents might include: original residence permit for foreigners, certificate of residence, family status, marriage certificate, contract of sale or lease of property, employment contract, last pay slips, tax returns, bank statement, etc.
- If approved, the visa is issued within two or three working days, and the passport is forwarded to DHL. After a maximum of another three working days, the passport will be available for collection at the DHL location selected during the online registration process (on average about five working days after the interview). If you select the home delivery option, it will take a few business days longer.
- Once your passport is at the DHL location, you will receive an e-mail by DHL with instructions on how to pick it up.
- If the visa is denied, your passport will be returned to you after the interview, along with a letter explaining the reasons for the visa refusal.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Work-Life Balance on Board Cruise Ships: A Survey on Crew Members' Well-Being

Author: Lütkenhaus, Carolin

Source: Tourism in Marine Environments, Volume 15, Number 2, 2020, pp. 73-83(11)

Publisher: Cognizant Communication Corporation

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3727/154427320X15833169859482>

Keywords: Crew Member, Cruise Ships, On Board, Well-Being, Work-Life Balance

Document Type: Research Article

Publication Date: June 1, 2020

Author Lütkenhaus, Carolin in his research article “Work-Life Balance on Board Cruise Ships: A Survey on Crew Members' Well-being” narrates that the cruise industry is a still-growing tourism sector where manpower is requirement is extensive due to the human involvement or dependency for almost all the services. Criticism from other sectors of hospitality and people in general regarding the working and living conditions on board cruise vessels have been in focus as a mostly highlighted topic in the media as well as in research literature. The well-being of the people running the floating hotel resorts is a critical success factor for the industry. As per Lütkenhaus, Carolin observation recently, the topic of employee well-being is connected to concepts of work-life balance at the workplace. He also mentions that there is very less information available on this topic about the cruise industry. His research aims at examining whether the concept of work-life balance is applicable to working and living crew members on board, as well as finding out the extent to which the critically discussed characteristics of this unique environment relate to their well-being. His study revealed all chosen factors, including the ones often criticized, are related to the work-life balance of crew members on board the cruise ships.

### 'All Aboard': Motivating Service Employees on Cruise Ships

Authors: Shobana Nair Sehkaran and Daniela Sevcikova  
Volume 18, Issue 1

01 June 2011, pp. 70-78

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1375/jhtm.18.1.70>

Published online by Cambridge University Press: 23 February 2012

As per Shobana Nair Sehkaran and Daniela Sevcikova, who are the presenter of this research paper.

That there is lack of research on the topics related to the scope of employment and the facilities maintained to observe the proper work environment in comparison with the rest of the hospitality industry. Cruise ship employees are expected to deliver best and high-quality services that would have a great impact on the quality of the tourist passengers experience about their vacation on board and the strength of the company to sustain in the cruising industry with the other sailing organizations. That is why it is very much of importance for every cruise line company to observe with great efficiency the level of employee motivation. The study showcases that employees were motivated to work for the money saving opportunities they have, that they can travel to different places free of charge and meet new people which would enrich them as a good knowledgeable person till the time when they carry the learning aspirations and get the attractive lifestyle the job offered. Authors underlines the importance of the working environment on the cruise ships which needs a great attention so that the crew members stay motivated.

### 'New Kids on the Ship': Organizational Socialization and Sense-Making of New Entrants to Cruise Ship Employment

Citation Metadata

Authors: Imke Matuszewski and John Blenkinsopp

Date: Annual 2011

From: Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (Vol. 18)

Publisher: Elsevier, Inc.

Document Type: Report

The report drafted by Imke Matuszewski and John Blenkinsopp indicates the difference between the perception and the relatively subjective reality of working on board cruise ships and their impact on the crew

member's life. The study brings out the reality about how these sailors make most out of these differences and make their experience as memorable one. After interviewing the ex crew members from the cruise liners about their perception of working on the vessel before joining on board the cruise ship and then actually working on board and after saying the last ADIOS to the sailing career, the authors realized that they had very little expectations prior to joining the ship they rather had a good understanding about the working environment of the ships. Though they had quite a realistic picture in their mind regarding the working culture, they were totally taken by a surprise about the living on board. The former employees from the cruise industry define it as a different world altogether. All together the cruise line employees shown nostalgia and romanticised about cruise ship life which was portrayed as carefree and secure, involving both freedom and captivity.

### **Working on Board – Job Perception, Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction in the Cruise Sector**

SveinLarsen<sup>ab</sup>

University of Bergen, School of Psychology,  
Dept. of Psychosocial Science, Norway  
EinarMarnburg<sup>b</sup>TorvaldØgaard<sup>b</sup>

University of Stavanger, Norwegian School of Hotel  
Management, Norway

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Available online 5 August 2011.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.06.014>

This paper by Svein Larsen, Einar Marnburg and Torvald Øgaard discusses the expected work environment and its impact on organizational commitment and job satisfaction in the cruise sector. The studying sample was the crew in a leading cruise liner organization. Authors drafted a questionnaire based on the information from a group of crew members about their experience of working on the cruise liner. The survey made them measure job perceptions among crew members. The results brought to notice the fact that all of the experience domains were related to job commitment and job satisfaction, but that the strongest effects were found to be perceived "Respect", the "Social atmosphere", and "Food and living quarters".

### **An Investigation into Hospitality Cruise Ship Work through the Exploration of Metaphors**

Adam, Dennett Cameron, Colin Bamford, Andrew Jenkins

Employee Relations

ISSN: 0142-5455

Publication date: 29 July 2014

Dennett, A., Cameron, D., Bamford, C. and Jenkins, A. (2014), «An investigation into hospitality cruise ship work through the exploration of metaphors», *Employee Relations*, Vol. 36 No. 5, pp. 480-495.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-08-2013-0111>

“An investigation into hospitality cruise ship work through the exploration of metaphors” is the research paper of Adam Dennett, Derek Cameron, Colin Bamford and Andrew Jenkins purpose behind this paper was to understand the very complex nature of the work which the waiters and pursers take up as their job on board cruise ships. This study revealed that these on board crew members have perception about themselves, about others, and about the world in which they work and live.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To know “cruise industry” a growing industry with having plentiful job opportunities.
- To know how to get a job on board cruise ship.
- To know about the life and its limitations on board the vessels.
- To know about the C-1/D visa process.

### **Research Methodology**

*Primary Data* - was collected from the mixed sample of various respondents majorly belonging to the culinary institutions. Primary data was collected through survey in the following ways:

- *Personal Interviews*: The answer was sought to a set of pre-conceived questions through personal interviews and the data was collected in a structured way.
- *Questionnaires*: Considering the Reviews, and the additional inputs, one questionnaire was prepared and distributed to various respondents.

- *By Observation:* The data was collected by observing the non-verbal behavior to understand dynamic behavioral process.

*Secondary Data* – was collected from published / unpublished literature on Cruise Line industry and Cruise line work and life and also the latest references available from the journals, newspapers, research publications and magazines, past records and other relevant sources available online.

*Questionnaire – Design and Implementation:* The questionnaire design was done with the aid of experts in statistical techniques and taking into account the depth needs & objectives of the study. The questionnaire was administered to the sample population and sample size.

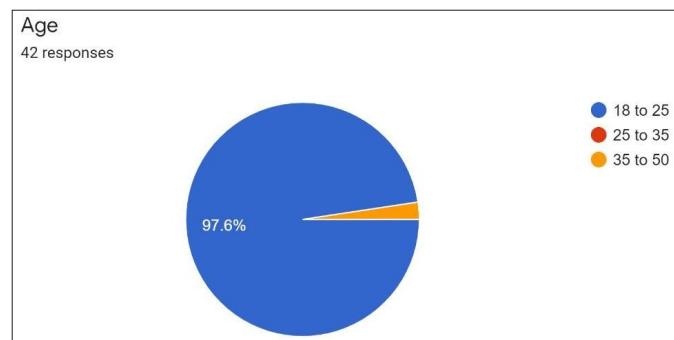
*Sampling Techniques:* To conduct this study different respondent was selected from various segments but majorly from culinary institutions and also from other related people. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed and in return 42 were received.

### Data Analysis and Data Interpretation

#### Q1) Age

**Table 1**

Age	How Many Selected	Percentage
18 – 25	41	97.62
25 – 35	0	0.00
35 – 50	1	2.38



**Fig. 1**

*Observation:* As per the chart various age groups were selected for the study ranging from 18 to 50 years. Most of

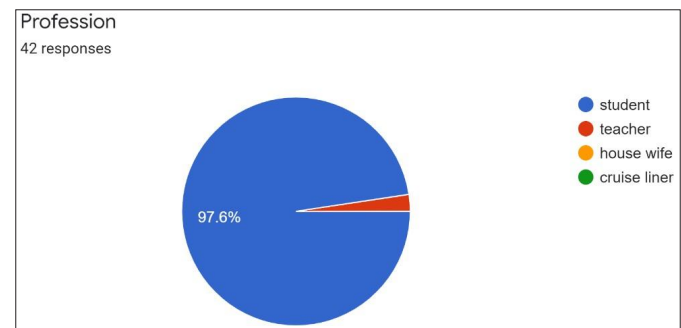
the respondents i.e. 97.62% of the total respondents were belonging to the age group of 18-25 years where as 2.38% of the respondents were belonging to 35-50 year category.

*Interpretation:* Majority of the respondents was youngsters and was purposely selected to understand their perception about the cruise industry.

#### Q2) Profession

**Table 2**

Profession	How Many Selected	Percentage
Student	41	97.62
Teacher	1	2.38
House wife	0	0.00
Cruise liners	0	0.00



**Fig. 2**

*Observation:* As per the chart it can be stated that the percentage of the culinary students were more than any other category a combine percentage of 97.62%. The rest of the respondents i.e. 2.83% were belonging to academic category.

*Interpretation:* A majority of the target respondents were students of a culinary institution as they are the one who would be using this study for their information.

#### Q3) According to you what is better ‘working on land’ or ‘working on cruise’?

**Table 3**

Better Working	How Many Selected	Percentage
Land	19	45.24%
Cruise	23	54.86%

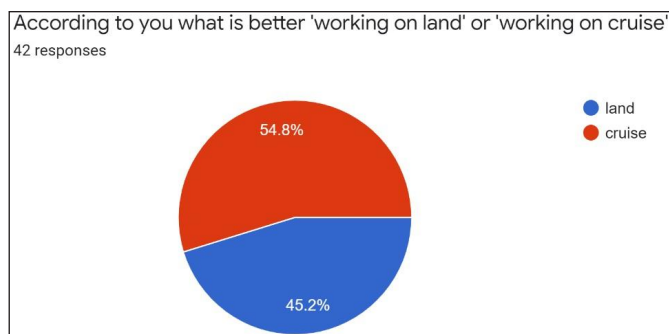


Fig. 3

*Observation:* According to the above chart it can be stated that majority of the respondents i.e. 54.86% were of an opinion that working on a cruise liner is better and 45.24% respondents believed that working on land is better.

*Interpretation:* A major thought process is that working on a cruise liner is better than working on the land.

Q4) Do cruise ship workers earn more money?

Table 4

More Money	How Many Selected	Percentage
Yes	26	61.90%
No	16	38.10%

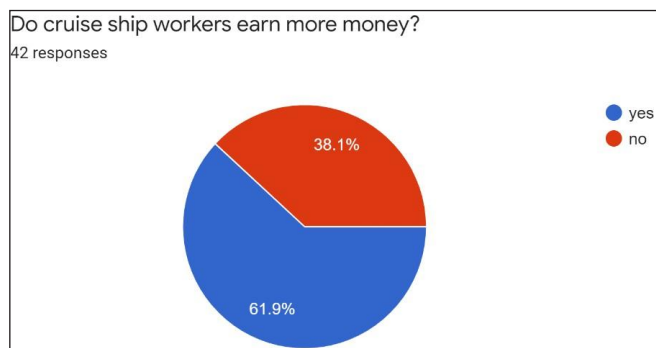


Fig. 4

*Observation:* According to the above chart it can be stated that majority of the respondents i.e. 61.90% are of opinion that cruise ship workers earn more money. However, 38.10% of the respondents were of the opposite opinion.

*Interpretation:* According to the data analysis it can be stated that cruise ship workers earn more money.

Q5) According to you should fresher's work on cruise line?

Table 5

Work on Cruise Line	How Many Selected	Percentage
Yes	25	59.50
No	17	40.50

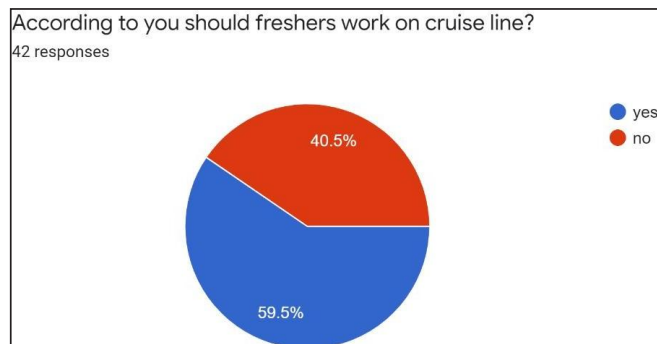


Fig. 5

*Observation:* According to the above chart it can be stated that 59.50% of the respondents were of opinion that fresher's having formal culinary education should work on cruise line. However rest i.e. 40.50% believes that the fresher's having formal culinary education should not work on cruise line.

*Interpretation:* The understanding about whether fresher's having formal culinary education should work on cruise line or not.

## FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

### Findings

- The chefs working on board has to put up their best performance with great working hours.
- They have to sacrifice their social life and have to stay away from their families.
- It is a risk to their life as even though they have a great technology to support them but when it comes to nature that might not be enough to save lives.
- The life on board has some limits but the people working on the vessels have made it a different life altogether to make their time as a memorable one.

## Suggestions

- If someone wants to work on board then he should start as early as possible.
- One should take proper training and understand the job which he would be taking up on board the cruise ships before joining it.
- Since it is different world out there on board cruise ships, care should be taken to accommodate accordingly.
- Fresher's to take proper training about machinery or equipment handling as they are of high sophistication.

## CONCLUSION

This topic was chosen to highlight the life on board for a chef/culinary professional i.e. Life of a chef on cruise ship about the process of getting a job, working condition and hours, to know about the education and visa requirements for cruise line jobs.

The topic discusses about the life of a chef working on a cruise ship. This research gives a better understanding

rather than a perception about the jobs, working hours, visa process, etc. and also the whole process of C1d visa is been explained along with the documents required.

This research also states that most of the students prefer to work on cruise rather than working on land because of the salary package the cruise line industry offers and also more than the money it is the opportunity to travel the world without spending a lot. It is also a growing industry in today's time due to change in the lifestyles and preferences about the fun and the leisure. Cruise industry has started employing the fresher's which has benefitted to the job seekers and also the cruise line companies.

## REFERENCES

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