

## Kitchen Assistant / Cook Job Description

### Overview:

The Kitchen Assistant is a live-in, position at Karmê Chöling (KCL) Shambhala Meditation Center. We are located in the Green Mountains of rural Vermont and are one of the oldest meditation retreat centers in North America. As staff, you would be an active community member in our household of 25-30 people. We foster an atmosphere of mindful body, speech, and mind and practice bringing these three elements into our daily activities and interactions. This is an excellent opportunity to live, work and practice with a group of active meditators.

Karmê Chöling operates a commercial sized kitchen providing meals for a range of diets which can include omnivore, vegetarian, vegan, gluten free and others. The kitchen assistant helps the kitchen manager and head cook in preparing nutritious, well-balanced, uplifted meals that use appropriate local and seasonal ingredients whenever possible. This position takes responsibility for maintaining a clean and sanitary environment, complying with the specific dietary needs of individuals in the household, assisting in food prep and dish washing as needed. A cheerful attitude and the ability to work comfortably under pressure will ensure success.

### Position responsibilities:

- Efficiently prepare a variety of meats, seafood, poultry, vegetables and other food items for cooking in broilers, ovens, grills, fryers and a variety of other kitchen equipment.
- Assume 100% responsibility for quality of products served.
- Adhere to pre-planned menu and special dietary needs with appropriate substitutions when necessary.
- Follow proper prep, plate presentation and garnish set up for all dishes. This may include any of the following: Service Area Buffet, Oryoki, Festive Dinners, Feasts, Banquets, Receptions, Special Celebrations, and other events.
- Know and comply consistently with our standard portion sizes, cooking methods, quality standards and kitchen rules, policies and procedures.
- Stock and maintain sufficient levels of food products at line stations to assure a smooth service period.
- Portion food products prior to cooking according to standard portion sizes and recipe specifications.
- Maintain a clean and sanitary work station including tables, shelves, grills, broilers, fryers, tilt skillet, convection oven, range and refrigeration equipment.
- Wash pots, pans and other cooking implements.
- Prepare items for broiling, grilling, frying, sautéing or other cooking methods by portioning, battering, breading, seasoning and / or marinating.
- Assist Kitchen Manager in tracking inventory and developing food orders.
- Handle, store and rotate all products properly.
- Assist in food prep assignments during shift as needed.
- Close kitchen properly and follow the closing checklist for kitchen stations. Assist others in closing the kitchen, including returning and storing food to the kitchen from the service area following meal service.
- Attend scheduled employee meetings and bring suggestions for improvement.

- Perform other related duties as assigned by the Kitchen Manager or Head Cook.
- Maintain high standards of personal hygiene, wearing chef pants, jackets and hats.
- Report to work on time.  
Contact the kitchen manager at least 1 hour prior to the beginning of a shift if unable to fulfill shift responsibilities.

Physical demands:

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met to successfully to perform the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable an individual with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- Must be able to reach, bend, stoop and frequently lift up to 40 pounds.
- Must be able to work in a standing position for long periods of time.

Required Training / Skill sets:

- Must be able to work in a religious environment and respect specific practices and silent periods.
- Ability to work calmly and kindly under pressure as well as maintaining decorum and composure during quieter times
- Ability to establish and maintain working relationships with staff, volunteers, and the general community
- Must be able to communicate clearly with managers and kitchen staff.
- Ability to prioritize
- Ability to take direction and give and receive feedback
- Ability to work with different levels of autonomy depending on the situation.  
This ranges from close supervision with detailed task lists to being able to work independently

Preferred qualifications:

Past experience with retreat centers is a plus. A minimum of six months experience in food preparation and cooking for large groups or a minimum of 6 months of work in a similar capacity.

This is a part-time, 27.5hr / week position. Position includes room and board at KCL, a flexible work schedule, as well as meditation opportunities built into the daily schedule.