JULIAN MERCER

CHEF

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Chef with 8+ years developing menus and leading kitchen teams in hotel and fine dining restaurants. Controls food cost, keeps health and safety standards high, and trains cooks to deliver consistent plates during busy services.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Executive Sous Chef Jan 2023 - Present
Four Seasons Hotel, Chicago, IL

- Run daily kitchen operations for a hotel restaurant serving about 250 covers on weekends, supervising a team of 14 cooks across the hot line, garde manger, and pastry stations.
- Developed three seasonal menus with local farms, increasing average check by about 9% and the share of high-margin dishes sold at dinner.
- Reduced food cost from 34% to 30% through portion control, yield testing, and tighter ordering par levels reviewed weekly with the purchasing team.
- Built recipe cards with exact costing for 40 dishes, which helped the team keep plate cost and presentation consistent across shifts.
- Maintained health inspection scores above 95 and led weekly sanitation and allergen training for all kitchen staff.
- Hired and trained eight cooks with station guides, cutting new hire ramp-up time from six weeks to four.
- Planned weekly prep lists and par levels with the pastry and banquet teams so service ran smoothly during sold-out events and short-notice private dining requests.

Sous Chef Mar 2020 - Dec 2022
Eleven Madison Park, New York, NY

- Led the line during service for a tasting menu restaurant, coordinating timing and plating across six stations during busy dinner services.
- Created weekly specials and amuse-bouche items that were added to the permanent tasting menu after guest and team feedback.
- Managed fish and meat purchasing with suppliers and reduced waste by about 15% through whole-product use, daily specials, and careful trim tracking.
- Scheduled the kitchen team and covered shifts to keep labor within budget during a staffing shortage, with no service cancelled.
- Prepared the kitchen for a health department re-inspection with detailed station checks and consistent execution.

Chef de Partie Jun 2018 - Feb 2020
Marriott Marquis, New York, NY

- Cooked on grill and saute stations for banquets and a restaurant of up to 400 covers a night, keeping tickets moving on time.
- Ran the sauce and grill section and trained two junior cooks in knife work and station setup.
- Maintained labeling, temperature logs, and first-in first-out rotation, passing every health inspection and internal sanitation review without a violation.
- Contributed recipes for a banquet menu update that guests rated among the top choices in feedback surveys during the holiday season.

CORE SKILLS

Menu development | Kitchen operations | Food cost control | Food safety and HACCP | Staff training | Inventory and ordering | Allergen management | Plating and presentation | Supplier relationships | Banquet production | Scheduling | Recipe costing | Quality control | Seasonal sourcing

EDUCATION

A.O.S. in Culinary Arts, The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, NY

CERTIFICATIONS

ServSafe Food Protection Manager | ServSafe Allergens Certification | Certified Sous Chef (CSC)