

Waiters and Waitresses

SOC: 35-3031 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$33,760

Median Salary

16,300

Employment

-1.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: No formal educational credential

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 20.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■■ Work-Life Balance

6.2/10 - Good work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	7.0/10	Investigative	3.8/10
Artistic	4.6/10	Social	7.6/10
Enterprising	5.2/10	Conventional	6.0/10

■ Top Skills Required

Communication skills, Customer-service skills, Detail oriented, Physical stamina, Physical strength

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Waiters and Waitresses are frontline hospitality professionals who provide **table service, food delivery, and customer care** in restaurants, cafes, hotels, and other dining establishments. They act as the primary connection between the kitchen and guests, ensuring orders are accurate, service is timely, and dining experiences are welcoming and enjoyable.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy working with people, thrive in fast-paced environments, and take pride in delivering excellent customer service.

What Do Waiters and Waitresses Do?

Waiters and waitresses manage guest service throughout the dining experience.

Common responsibilities include:

- Greeting guests and presenting menus
- Taking food and beverage orders accurately
- Communicating orders to kitchen and bar staff
- Serving meals and drinks promptly and professionally
- Checking on guests to ensure satisfaction
- Handling special requests or dietary needs
- Processing payments and closing checks

Types of Serving Roles

Waiters and waitresses may work in different dining settings:

- Casual Dining Servers: Provide service in family-style or informal restaurants.
- Fine Dining Servers: Deliver high-end, detail-focused service experiences.
- Banquet or Event Servers: Serve guests at weddings, conferences, or large events.
- Breakfast or Café Servers: Work in fast-paced morning or café environments.
- Room Service Servers: Deliver meals in hotels or resorts.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Waiters and waitresses combine service skills with organization and communication.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Training Pathway

Most waiters and waitresses enter the role with minimal formal education:

- No Formal Education Required (typical): Training provided on the job
- On-the-Job Training: Learning menus, service standards, and procedures
- Food Safety Certification: Required in many locations
- Customer Service Experience: Helpful for advancement
- Continued Skill Development: Improving service and upselling techniques

Where Do Waiters and Waitresses Work?

They are employed across a wide range of food service environments:

- Restaurants and Cafes
- Hotels and Resorts
- Bars and Lounges
- Catering and Event Venues

- Cruise Ships and Entertainment Venues

Work schedules often include nights, weekends, and holidays.

How Much Do Waiters and Waitresses Earn?

Earnings vary by location, establishment, and tipping structure:

- Base Pay: Often hourly wages, sometimes at tipped minimum levels
- Tips and Gratuities: Can significantly increase total income
- Experienced or Fine Dining Servers: Typically earn higher overall compensation

Income may fluctuate based on shifts, seasonality, and customer volume.

Is This Career Difficult?

Serving can be physically and emotionally demanding. Workers must stay on their feet for long periods, manage multiple tables, and handle difficult situations with professionalism. The challenge lies in maintaining speed, accuracy, and friendliness during peak service times.

Who Should Consider Becoming a Waiter or Waitress?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy interacting with people
- Work well in fast-paced environments
- Are organized and detail-oriented
- Can handle pressure and multitasking
- Want a flexible job with transferable skills

How to Prepare Early

- Practice communication and customer service skills
- Learn basic food safety and hygiene rules
- Develop time management and multitasking abilities
- Gain experience in food service or hospitality roles
- Observe and learn from experienced servers

Waiters and waitresses shape dining experiences through attentiveness, accuracy, and hospitality—turning meals into memorable moments by making guests feel welcomed, cared for, and well served from start to finish.

Generated by StartRight • Data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & O*NET

Source: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/food-preparation-and-serving/waiters-and-waitresses.htm>