



# TOP 10

## Ways to Bring Culinary Skills to Long-Term Care

This list was compiled by  
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### 1. BRING BACK SCRATCH COOKING

The earliest days of cookery were the most basic in application, and likewise the most developed in terms of flavor and depth. All too often we see convenience items that can easily be made in-house like stocks, soups, sauces, etc. Some basic scratch cooking will even save you some money! Once you've incorporated this concept, be sure to share this information with your residents!

### 2. STRIVE TO REDUCE WASTE

Search your menu to utilize waste from prepped produce, butchery, or from the cooking processes. This might mean using bones and meat scraps to make a stock/broth, taking trim from produce in a soup to easily be strained and frozen for later use, or even reserving bacon "grease" to sauté your breakfast potatoes or to pan-fry eggs.

### 3. TURN ON THE FLAMES

Something we see often in long-term care is HEAVY use of steamers, low-heat ovens, and boiling pots of water. While these techniques do have a time and place, the flavor development from a good, ole' Maillard Reaction (chemical reaction responsible for the browning of various amino acids) is missing.

### 4. STAY TRENDY

Each year, organizations like the American Culinary Federation, National Restaurant News, and even the Huffington Post offer predictions and tips for the upcoming year's food trends. You can easily access these reports, or even have them sent directly to you by signing up for e-mails. Then, you can add them into your menu as a feature or on a special occasion.

### 5. GARDE MANGER

"Garde Manger" is the classic culinary term for "keeper of the food." This person (or concept) is responsible for cold items like salads, appetizers, and garnishes. One thing that really elevates any meal is to add a small "Amuse Bouche" ("mouth amuser"), starter salad, or appetizer. These can be made in advance during downtime and can be stored cold. Don't forget to garnish EVERY SINGLE PLATE.

### 6. HOT ON HOT/COLD ON COLD

While this concept seems simple, you'd be surprised by the number of establishments (even restaurants) that don't do it. Serve hot food on hot plates/bowls and cold food on cold plates/bowls. This is the detail that separates a good meal from a great one...

and may even eliminate the temperature complaints when food takes a little longer than expected to get to the table!

### 7. FOCUS ON THE DEETS

Every small detail is crucial. You've likely seen (or even had) the most bland, basic "hospital food" at some point. That's often because the environment is just that: bland and basic. Every detail from the table sets to the staff uniforms to the sanitation of your kitchen should remain focused and prepared. An old French Chef once told me, "If you look good, you feel good, and you perform good!" It is as true as the perfectly-creased pleats in his chef coat and the shiny polish of his clogs.

### 8. TRAINING DAY

Start by teaching your staff one technique each week, and then notice and reward the proper use of that technique. For example, teach staff how to properly braise, show your staff how to sear in fat at a high temperature, and then finish covered in a variable amount of liquid. This seemingly simple concept may take the boring, tough pork roast on your menu to a mouth-watering, succulent new level.

### 9. EMBRACE GUEST FEEDBACK

Let's face it; your residents are your guests. And their opinion is really the only opinion that matters. Get into the dining room and get some feedback (and embrace it). Then, try installing a "Resident Request" or "Daily Feature" on your menu where you take that feedback and bring it to life! Maybe it's as simple as the addition of muffins at breakfast one day a week or making Mrs. Johnson's Famous Meatloaf recipe for lunch on Friday. Either way, embracing the feedback will go a long way in increasing guest satisfaction.

### 10. BUILD TEAMWORK

A kitchen is a team like any other. The classical culinary system set up by the legendary Auguste Escoffier is one of a military brigade (actually coined "Brigade de Cuisine") which is a hierarchy in the kitchen similar to that of a sports team or a surgical team where all parts form one, cohesive unit. This process innately instills a sense of ownership that elevates your kitchen to a performing force.