

CHAPTER 1: LE GARDE MANGER

The Larder or *Garde Manger* as it is known in French, is a department set aside for the storage of perishable foods, both raw and cooked, and where such foodstuff such as meat, fish, poultry and even game are prepared and made ready for cooking. In this department too, all cold items found on the menu, such as hors d'oeuvre, cold fish or meat dishes, cold sauces salads and salad dressings and charcuterie are prepared and dressed.

For these functions to be effectively carried out, it is *essential* that:

1. The larder should be separate from the kitchen and located in a cool place. At the same time it should be close to the kitchen to avoid undue running about between the two departments which are closely inter-related. It should be light and airy and well ventilated, sufficiently spacious to allow the staff to carry out their work efficiently. During the setup of the larder, enough attention must be paid to the physical attributes such as the flooring, tiling, exhaust systems, ventilation and lighting, both natural as well as artificial.
2. It should be fitted with the necessary equipment that would be required to carry out the work. Equipment could be classified as heavy, light and miscellaneous (see attached list for the classification of the equipment).
3. There should be adequate and well trained staff. Most of the work in the larder is of a specialized nature and requires proper training and understanding.

Breakdown of work

It naturally follows that the work in the larder needs to be broken down into various sections and each section is the responsibility of a chef trained in that area. The Chef Garde Manger who is the over all in charge of the department allocates the duties. His assistants are called either assistant chefs or commis garde manger. Depending upon the volume of the work, the number of sections will vary and so will the number of the staff required. At times

in a small establishment, the larder chef may work single-handed, and carry out all the work himself.

The sections could include:

- Hors d'oeuvres and appetizers
- Cold sauces
- Salads and salad dressings
- Vegetables and vegetable carvings
- Fruit and fruit carvings
- Other Non edible displays (like ice carvings)
- Sandwiches and canapés (for buffet functions)
- Charcuterie
- Vegetable Pre preps (commissary)
- Butchery (including fishmongery and the ecaillage)

Very often, in smaller establishments, the sections could be collapsed into smaller units doing more than one task and one chef /commis could be responsible for more than one section.

Responsibilities of the Chef Garde Manger

The responsibilities of the Larder Chef are many and varied. He is responsible to the Executive chef for the **smooth running and operation** of his department. He is responsible for all **menu planning**, developing new dishes, standardizing the food items produced in his department. He is also responsible for **co ordination** between his staff and has to make sure that they have understood the work required from them and the production schedule, either daily or weekly. This co ordination also extends to the other departments and different kitchens as the Garde Manger does inter act with them all. **Training** is another important function he has to carry out. As I have mentioned earlier, the work of the larder is of a highly skilled nature and involves a lot of expensive ingredients, procedures and equipment It is therefore imperative that the staff is well trained. With regards to the staff, the larder Chef is also responsible for their scheduling and duty rotas. A lot of pre preparation is done in the larder for the other departments and satellite kitchens. Their requirements must be

made available well in time. He also has to maintain registers to record the receipts and dispatch of the foodstuff. He is also responsible for **maintaining hygiene and sanitation standards** in the department. Remember, a lot of the foodstuff being processed here is in the raw state and susceptible to contamination and possible food poisoning. Kitchen safety and Food safety are crucially important. In this day and age **keeping abreast of modern trends** is also important. This relates to current eating habits, new equipment and new products that have been introduced in the market that will help the Chef Garde Manger in his work. Doing market surveys, visiting other hotels and interacting with other chefs will help in this regard. **Control** is another important aspect of the chefs role. Understandably, this is a difficult task in a department that does not have any sales figures to measure against. But controlling pilferage and losses due to poor storage as well as standardization and portion control will all help.

Larder Control

If the larder is to be run effectively, efficiently and economically, it is essential that the Chef Garde Manger exercise strict control over the foodstuff received and stored in the department. This will involve:

1. Checking the quality and quantity of all food received in the department.
2. Ensuring that all food stuff is stored at the right temperature and that they can easily be checked
3. That the food is protected from contamination by vermin.
4. That portion control is ensured.
5. That stock is regularly turned over.
6. That food is not over stocked.
7. A simple daily stock sheet to be maintained by each sub department.
8. Every possible effort is made to ensure the highest standard of hygiene.
9. Pilferage is discouraged and controlled.

A simple control system should be installed to keep a check. It should be simple to use otherwise at busy periods it will be ignored and this will itself defeat the purpose of control.

List of Equipment, Machinery and Tools

In order to ensure that the work in the department is carried out efficiently, it should be properly equipped. Good equipment will help in carrying out the tasks effectively and cut down on wastage. Heavy equipment especially, must be carefully selected as the investment should last several years. Heavy equipment should be properly installed by the manufacturer and correct operating procedures explained to the staff concerned. This is specially for processing equipment which have sharp blades and several small removable parts.

Heavy:

- Refrigeration equipment including refrigerators, walk-ins, reach-in, pull outs, traulsen, deep freezers, bottle coolers, ice machines, coolers and chillers.
- Food Processors with attachments for grinding, pureeing, kneading, mixing,
- Buffalo choppers, bone saws
- Gas range, boilers, heaters (if required)
- Weighing scales Electronic and manual
- Steel tables, cupboards, storage racks and sinks

Light:

- Mixers, juicers
- Butchers block
- Storage bins and shelves
- Slicers
- Blow torch
- Pots, pans, stockpots

Miscellaneous:

- Frying and flat spoons
- Assorted knives
- Butchers saw (Tenon and bow)
- Butchers chopper
- Filleting knives and palette knives
- Piping bags and assorted nozzles
- Peelers, fancy cutters, mandolin slicer
- Wooden spoons and mushrooms
- Cutlet bat and steak hammers
- Larding and trussing needles and pins
- Lemon zesters, decorating knives and vegetable scoops
- Skewers, butchers hooks
- Brining syringe, brinometer, assorted thermometers
- Assorted trays for storage of food.

All small equipment must be washed and cleaned and dried after every use.

For further reference:

The Art of Garde Manger

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