

You have questions...Mezzaluna has answers

What is the difference between a Personal Chef and a Private Chef?

A private chef is employed by one individual or family full time, and is often “living in”, and preparing up to 3 meals per day. A Personal Chef serves several clients, usually one per day, and provides multiple meals that are custom designed for the client’s particular requests and requirements. These meals are packaged and stored so that the client may enjoy them at their leisure in the future.

Who needs a Personal Chef?

ANYONE. Mezzaluna Personal Chef Service is for people who don’t have the time, interest or skills to plan, shop for and prepare daily meals. A typical client is someone who is tired of fast food or dining out who wants to enjoy healthy, nutritious meals on their own time schedule in the comfort of their own home. Busy professionals, retirees, new parents and those just home from the hospital are typical clients. Our goal is to simplify your life by taking on a vital but time consuming chore by putting a delicious meal on the table for you and your family.

What are some of the benefits of having a Personal Chef?

Convenience – Imagine stress free mealtimes, relaxing and dining in your own home without the headache of planning, shopping, preparing and cleaning up. With Mezzaluna you can enjoy a beautiful custom made dinner curled up on the couch in your jammies if you want!

Health – Delicious, nutritious meals prepared exactly to your standards. Our service is a great support for those following or transitioning to a new or challenging diet. Special dietary requests for one or more members of the family can be met, so that mealtime can be relaxing and enjoyable.

Value – Compare the time spent planning, driving, shopping, waiting in line, cooking and cleaning up with restaurant dining. When dining out, there is travel and waiting time, gas, drinks, tip...it all adds up. How would *you* rather spend your time and money?

I can cook, why hire a Personal Chef?

Many people can follow a recipe, but do they want to? The cooking itself may be an easy task but think of the time associated with it—preparation and shopping that can be a burden. Also think of the freshness of the food being prepared for you. Who has time to shop for the freshest ingredients just before cooking them? How many times have you gone grocery shopping with grand ideas of what you will cook, only to look in your refrigerator at the end of the week to see the produce & other items wilting before your eyes because you haven’t been able to “get around to it”? Your time is precious; use it to do what you really enjoy!

Do you cook in my kitchen?

Yes, we do prepare your meals in the safety of your own kitchen. Oregon law requires personal chefs to use their client’s kitchens unless the chef has access to a commercially zoned kitchen. On our agreed upon cooking date we bring the fresh ingredients for your meals along with our own pots, pans,

and utensils. Then we prepare your entrees on site. At the end of the day we leave your kitchen clean and full of the aroma of good home cooking!

What do I need to do to prepare for the cooking day?

Please make sure the kitchen counters are cleared and clean to ensure sanitary working conditions. Your refrigerator and freezer, stove, oven, and microwave must be in good working order, The refrigerator and freezer also need to have space to store your meals.

How long will you be here?

We’ll be cooking several different entrees and side dishes from scratch, so it will take several hours. We cannot say exactly how many hours, however we’re most willing to work with your schedule or situation, and we can make arrangements in advance so that the cooking date fits into your schedule compatibly.

I’ll be home that day. Is it okay if I watch - or help?

Since we work with very sharp knives and other dangerous tools, we are best able to get your job done without personal interaction. Distractions also can cause us to incur burns, cuts, and leave out ingredients from your food. You hired us and we want to provide you with the best product possible. You are welcome to come in and visit for 15 minutes, but after that we’ll need the kitchen to work alone in order to complete the job that you hired us to do.

Are you insured?

Yes. John Paulk, Mezzaluna’s executive chef, carries liability insurance and is licensed with the state of Oregon and city of Portland. He is certified through the American Culinary Federation and has a current Food Handler’s Card (number 11114) required by Multnomah County. As part of his training, Chef John has extensive knowledge of food safety sanitation.

Do I heat the food?

Yes. Any entrees that have been stored for you in your freezer should be defrosted overnight in your refrigerator. You then heat your meals to be enjoyed at the peak of their flavor. We will leave you easy to follow heating instructions for each entree.

How much freezer space do you need?

It depends on the number of meals you request, and the sizes of the containers, but it does generally require a considerable amount of freezer space. Efficient storage is one of the reasons we prefer to select the appropriate size, uniform storage containers for our clients.

Can you use my containers?

Once again, uniform size containers take less storage space in your freezer, and we will bring the appropriate containers for the entrees we are preparing each cooking date. If you will save the containers for us that held the entrees you have already enjoyed, we will take those back with us each cooking date, so we will actually be rotating containers in and out of your kitchen regularly. There is a one-time fee of \$90 to purchase glass containers for you. They are yours to keep.

What type side dishes do you prepare?

We prepare side dishes that complete the entree you have selected - For instance, if you have ordered a beautiful savory stew entree, we will prepare a rice or polenta side dish to be enjoyed with the stew. We always allow my clients to select and prepare their own green vegetables since people have such strong preferences in that area.

What if I want you to prepare additional side dishes as well?

We'd be happy to provide that service for you; however, it will entail an additional fee.

The cost seems to be about what I would pay for an entree in a restaurant - why is that?

Our fees represent all of the components that make up a professional personal chef service.

Personal food assessment and eating habits

Customized menu

Shopping for all ingredients

Cooking, labeling, and storing of your entrees

Clean up of your kitchen

If you were to compare a personal chef service to restaurant service you could think of it this way: For a restaurant, you must drive to get there, possibly wait for a table, take a chance that your server is having a bad day, and if you have allergies or special requests you don't always have the guarantee that they will be honored, since most entrees are "assembly line" ready in the kitchen. After eating your meal you must pay for it, tip the server, and get back in your vehicle to drive home.

If you have Mezzaluna do the planning and cooking for you, you can heat a beautiful entree that has been prepared specifically for your palate and requirements, and eat it in the comfort of your own home. You can even enjoy it curled up on the couch in your "jammies" if you want.

Another factor to consider is that our professional personal chef service may also help you "control" your food costs, as you will be less likely to impulse buy in the grocery store or opt for low-quality fast food, convenience food or restaurant food. Remember all that produce you bought with good intentions of making home-cooked family meals . . . but never got to . . . and had to throw out? No more of that!

When you consider the cost of groceries, the time needed to plan the variety of healthy meals, shopping, cooking and clean up, you'll likely find the cost of our service quite affordable.

Are the costs of the groceries included in your fee?

Yes. All prices include the groceries. There are some items like lobster, crab, or duck, that you will need to pay for in addition to the normal fee.

Do I pay you ahead of each cooking date?

Yes, it is customary to pay for the service in advance of your cooking date. If you like you may leave us a check for the upcoming cooking date on the day we are cooking. Mezzaluna accepts personal checks as well as major credit cards through www.paypal.com, however this service does require a small service fee.

How long will the food last us?

Depending on how many entrees you order, and how many evenings you eat at home we can determine approximately how long your meals will last. If you travel for business, or entertain in restaurants during the week, or just enjoy eating out on occasion the meals will take you further than if you eat in each night.

How often will we need your service?

We'll be happy to help you determine just how often you will want to schedule Mezzaluna to serve your needs. We'll make sure it supports your busy lifestyle without putting any pressure on you.

Can I order half of the regular service?

We wish we could make that available to you, but the service doesn't work that way. For this to be a profitable business for us, we cannot take the same amount of cooking time and produce half the amount of food. It takes the same amount of planning, shopping and preparation time to cook 10 portions of food as it does for 20 portions of food.