

COOKING FOR THE PRESIDENT

by Carollyne Hutter

"It's exciting work. I love what we do. My favorite part is making people happy. It's an awesome opportunity to cook for the First Family, their guests, and the public," Chef Cris says.

Chef Cris started out as an assistant chef during the Clinton Administration. In 2005, First Lady Laura Bush appointed her as the Executive Chef. In 2008, First Lady Michelle Obama reappointed her as Executive Chef, because of her passion for healthy eating.

Chef Cris has four chefs who help her. And for large events, she brings in even more chefs. Besides cooking, she has to select the recipes and plan the meals. She cooks for official dinners, social events, and family entertaining.

One of the biggest challenges for a White House chef is preparing state dinners for visiting foreign leaders. Chef Cris explains that it can take three months to prepare for these formal meals. The staff has to research the foreign culture. They also have to make sure the menu is appropriate to all guests' dietary needs. Before the event, she tests all the recipes.

Cristeta "Cris" Comerford has one of the most famous jobs in the food world. She's the Executive Chef for the White House.

Healthy foods are a big part of Chef Cris's menus. In 2009, the First Lady and local schoolchildren planted the largest vegetable garden ever on the White House lawn. This garden has more than 55 varieties of vegetables along with fruits. Chef Cris uses the vegetables and fruits from the garden in her cooking.

Chef Cris grew

up in a large family of 11 children in the Philippines. When she was a child, she helped her mother in the kitchen. But she never thought about becoming a chef. It was her father's idea that she study food at college.

After cooking at the White House, Chef Cris goes home to her family. To relax at home, she bakes with her daughter. Together, they love to make cupcakes.



