

# Super chef extraordinaire



**From cheeky boy to famous chef, Jamie Oliver has transformed himself into a top celebrity. So who exactly is he?**

**F**or years, we've been turning pop singers, models and actors into celebrities. But celebrity chefs? Until recently, the idea would have been inconceivable. Now our screens are full of trendy, fast-talking super-chefs cooking up delicious recipes. Top of the celebrity list is Jamie Oliver. With his friendly and informal style, he's introduced us to a whole new type of cookery programme. In his latest series he campaigned on his own to make the government ban the use of junk food in school dinners. Before that, we saw him battling to turn fifteen teenagers into cooks. His cookbooks, meanwhile, have sold by the million, making him a multi-millionaire.

**B** Jamie's passion for cooking started young. His dad ran a pub and he helped out in the kitchen. 'It just seemed such a cool place – everyone working together to make this lovely stuff and having a laugh with everybody,' he explains. The boys at his school tried to persuade him that cooking was 'a girlie thing' but he disagreed. He could buy the coolest trainers in town with the money he earned in the kitchen! He left school at sixteen, not much good at writing and spelling, but knowing the only thing he wanted was to be a chef.

**C** Jamie was working at a London restaurant when he got his big break. A TV producer, there to make a documentary, noticed the cheeky cook. He thought Jamie's casual manner and jokes would go down well with audiences and he ended up giving him his own series, *The Naked Chef*. The series got its name from the recipes Jamie thought up, which were down-to-earth and uncomplicated. The programmes were extremely successful and Jamie was catapulted into the limelight. Viewers watched him speeding about London on a

scooter with rock 'n' roll music blaring, and hosting parties for all his friends. Jamie spent months travelling the world to promote the show, but after two phenomenal years his popularity decreased.

**D** It was the fabulous new series, *Jamie's Kitchen*, that won the viewers back. After auditioning 15,000 jobless young people, Jamie picked fifteen winners who would be filmed learning to cook in his new London restaurant, *Fifteen*. Millions of viewers watched as Jamie tried to teach his trainees, but it wasn't easy. They bunked off work and were rude to the staff. They told Jamie sob stories and even accused him of using them to improve his own career. Nine teenagers survived the crash course. The TV show made *Fifteen* the most talked-about eating place in London and it soon became impossible to book a table there. Jamie now plans to repeat the idea elsewhere in the UK, and in Sydney and New York.

**E** Jamie's latest challenge has taken the UK by storm. In *Jamie's School Dinners* he became a school dinner chef so he could let kids see the junk ingredients that went into their favourite meals. To their horror, they discovered that the Turkey Twizzlers they enjoyed eating were not made from real turkey meat, as they had thought, but included a mixture of water, pork fat, turkey skin and food colouring! They also learned exactly why a diet of fast food makes you fat and unhealthy. The kids had never realised how much the food we eat affects our mood, looks, behaviour, health, growth and even our ability to concentrate! Jamie persuaded them to try nutritious foods like fruit, yoghurt and vegetables for lunch, instead of their usual fast-food diet of burgers, chips, sweets and fizzy drinks. To their amazement, they discovered that fresh food tasted better than processed food. The series got everyone thinking, and the government has now promised to bring back practical cookery lessons for students to teach them the importance of a balanced diet, food safety and hygiene.



**4** Read the article. Match the questions (1–15) with the paragraphs (A–E).

Which paragraph mentions

- 1 achieving fame very quickly? ....
- 2 purchasing fashionable items of clothing? ....
- 3 opening new restaurants abroad? ....
- 4 being unaware of the contents of some food products? ....
- 5 struggling alone to change a bad situation? ....
- 6 resisting peer pressure? ....
- 7 being 'discovered' by someone in the media? ....
- 8 instructing a group of unemployed youths? ....
- 9 being unable to reserve a place in a restaurant? ....
- 10 choosing a career? ....
- 11 taking a job to point out the dangers of some food? ....
- 12 producing meals that are not too difficult to cook? ....
- 13 behaving in a relaxed and humorous way? ....
- 14 behaving badly towards other workers? ....
- 15 helping a family member to prepare food? ....

**5** Find words in the article that match these meanings.

- 1 unimaginable (para A)
- 2 did something publicly to change something (para A)
- 3 stop (para A)
- 4 most fashionable (para B)
- 5 not fussy (para C)
- 6 incredible (para C)
- 7 people who are taught and helped by someone more experienced (para D)
- 8 a course where you learn a lot in a short time (para D)