

# Opportunity Knocks: Creative Income Streams for People Who Love to Cook

By Valerie Young

To an "opportunity analyst" like me, words like, "All the good ideas are already taken," or "I had a great idea but then I found out someone else was doing it" are the career equivalent of nails on a chalkboard. With a U.S. population estimated at close to 300 million and a world's population of six and a half billion – it's a big world out there folks with plenty of untapped ideas and opportunities to go around.



To say all the good ideas are taken is like saying, "I was going to write a cookbook but then I went to the bookstore and found someone had beaten me to it." Have you looked in the cookbook section of a large bookstore these days?

A lot of cookbooks can be based on the style of cooking – Italian, Thai, French, vegetarian, and so on. Some are specific to the type of cookware used, like for example, crock pots, woks, or grills. Still other cookbooks feature recipes centering on one particular food like garlic or goat cheese.

Regional cookbooks are nothing new. But what if the location is not north, south, east or west but "up"? While most cookbooks note recipe variations based on altitude, baking teacher and cookbook author Susan G. Purdy decided to reach for the sky. Her book *Pie in the Sky: Successful Baking at High Altitudes* includes 100 recipes for cakes, pies, breads, cookies, and pastries.

Working with physicists and doing her own testing from sea-level to the mountains of Colorado and everywhere in between, Susan found that a lot of conventional wisdom about high altitude baking didn't pan out. Because her cookbook takes into account a range of altitudes, it's perfect for RVers or others who travel to different altitudes.

The idea of location cookbooks got me thinking. There are a number of cookbooks out there on microwaves and on cooking with 3, 4, or 5 ingredients. But what about a cookbook that combines the two aimed at the business traveler staying at extended-stay hotels? Find out which hotel has the most locations and partner with them to sell the cookbook to guests and to stock their mini-kitchens with the ingredients in your recipes.

To get you started, Better Homes and Gardens website offers free software to create your own cookbook  
<http://ww5.bhg.com/bhg/mycookbook/index.jhtml?ordersrc=gmycookbook>.

Another cooking-related opportunity was inspired by a recent USA Today (February 10th, 2006) article featuring over a dozen restaurants, hotels, inns and resorts offering cooking classes and opportunities to play chef for a day. For example,

apparently while I was sitting in the dining room at the Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North on a recent speaking trip, other guests were paying for the chance to be in the kitchen helping chefs fill orders and to make dinner for guests at their own table. The cost, which includes the chef joining your party for dessert is \$500.

Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia holds several popular cooking classes including Barbecue University taught by barbecue cookbook author, Steve Raichlen. Rates start at \$3,000 per person with a discounted rate for couples and includes three nights lodging and some meals. Clearly the cost is not a deterrent since most of this summer's classes are already sold out. More reasonably priced are the \$320 weekend "culinary escapes" at Wheatleigh, a luxury hotel in Lenox, Massachusetts. The price includes all classes and some meals. Lodging is extra.

So where's the opportunity? Right now, it appears each location is marketing their offerings on their own. That presents an opportunity for someone to create a portal website where cooking fans can find these kinds of courses around the country. Charge each establishment a monthly or annual fee to be listed. The price could be based on a percentage of the course fee. Or, if you're going to register people directly at your site, you could receive a percentage of each registration.

If your writing skills aren't up to snuff, hire a ghost writer. Or take a self-study course like the American Writers and Artist Institute's Passport to Romance. You can learn more about this and other helpful resources for travel lovers in the [Cool Jobs](#) section at Changing Course ([ChangingCourse.com/cooljobs.htm](http://ChangingCourse.com/cooljobs.htm))

There is no end to ways to turn an interest into income. All you need is an open mind, a little creative thinking, and the willingness to act. As with any idea, start small... but by all means, start.

### **About the Author**

Outside the job box expert, Valerie Young, abandoned her corporate cubicle to become the Dreamer in Residence at [ChangingCourse.com](http://ChangingCourse.com) offering resources to help you discover your life mission and live it. Her career change tips have been cited in Kiplinger's, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today Weekend, Woman's Day, and elsewhere and on-line at MSN, CareerBuilder, and iVillage.com. An expert on the Impostor Syndrome, Valerie has spoken on the topic of [How to Feel as Bright and Capable as Everyone Seems to Think You Are](#) to such diverse organizations as Daimler Chrysler, Bristol-Meyers Squibb, Harvard, and American Women in Radio and Television.