

## Gordon Ramsay's Overly Formulaic 'Hell's Kitchen' Has Grown Cold

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 28, 2009 - 12:17pm

- [Brian Tallerico](#) [2]
- [Cooking Show](#) [3]
- [FOX](#) [4]
- [Gordon Ramsay](#) [5]
- [Hell's Kitchen](#) [6]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [7]
- [Television](#) [8]
- [Top Chef](#) [9]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [10]



Television Rating: **1.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – By its very nature, reality television is formulaic. “[Survivor](#) [11],” “[The Amazing Race](#) [12],” “[Project Runway](#) [13],” “[Top Chef](#) [9]” - They all follow the same structure every year. But good reality TV mixes it up with interesting competitors and enough variety to keep viewers interested. It has gotten to the point where you can barely tell one episode of “Hell’s Kitchen” from another one, much less from season to season.

It’s crystal clear that Fox and Gordon Ramsay are not even remotely interested in fielding the most talented team of potential chefs. That’s the goal of Bravo’s excellent “[Top Chef](#) [9]”. “[Hell’s Kitchen](#) [6]” is the “[American Idol](#) [14]” auditions of cooking shows. They need two to three people who can actually cook, so they can crown a winner, but the other dozen or so wouldn’t survive a day in a high school cafeteria.



Hell's Kitchen: Chef Gordon Ramsay turns up the heat in season 5 of Hell's Kitchen premiering Thursday, Jan. 29 (9:00-10:00 PM ET/PT) on FOX.  
*Photo credit: Patrick Ecclesine/FOX*

Watching completely inept people try to survive in Gordon Ramsay’s kitchen is mildly entertaining. Ramsay swear, screams, and spits out food like no one else. But the already weak premise of the show has reached its breaking point with season five.



Hell's Kitchen: Chef Gordon Ramsay turns up the heat in season 5 of Hell's Kitchen premiering Thursday, Jan. 29 (9:00-10:00 PM ET/PT) on FOX.  
*Photo credit: Patrick Ecclesine/FOX*

It would be one thing if the narrator of “Hell’s Kitchen” wasn’t constantly talking about the strength of this season’s contestants and trying to sell the viewer a false bill of goods.

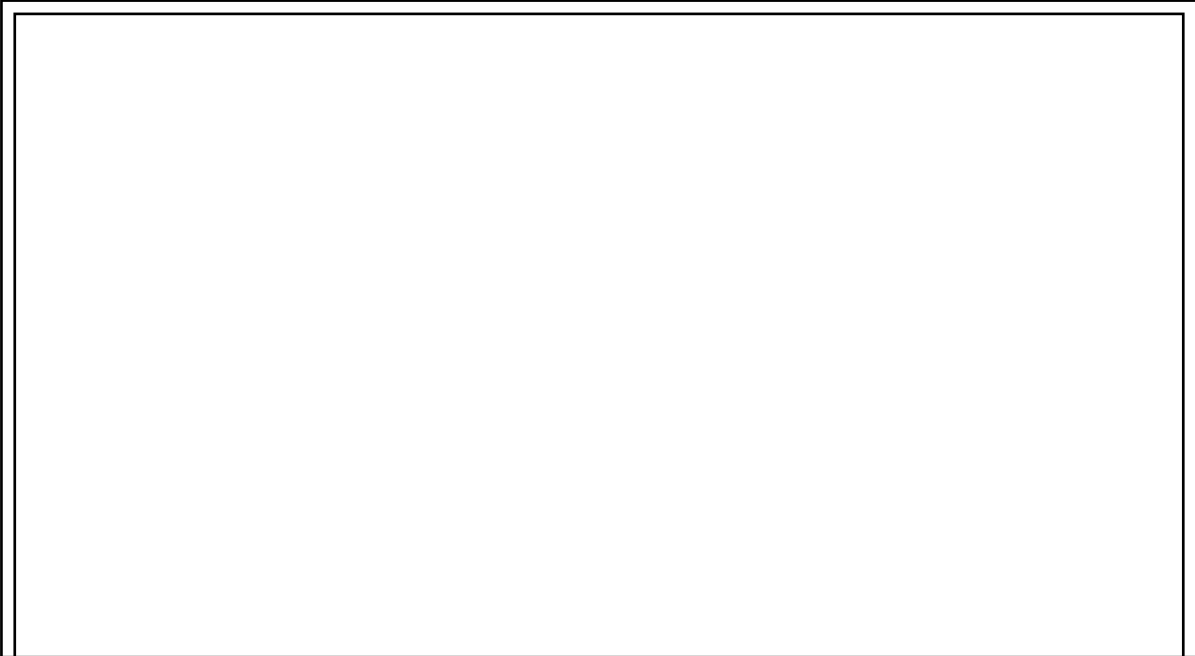
Which one is the strong one? Giovanni, the guy who doesn’t even know what polenta is? Colleen, the culinary instructor who suggests that Gordon take lessons in manners and puts sugar instead of salt in her risotto? Lucy, the buffet cook who threatens to quit before the restaurant has even opened?

It’s also obvious that it must be a prerequisite that the contestants on “Hell’s Kitchen” have never seen the show. How else to explain the fact that menu has barely changed in five seasons and yet these people still don’t know how to cook the basic appetizers from Ramsay’s restaurant? It’s likely that the first question asked of potential chefs is “do you know how to cook risotto?” And the answer better be “what the hell is risotto?” if they want to make it to round two.

If you’ve never seen “Hell’s Kitchen,” the concept is simple. Find over a dozen chefs who can barely cook ramen and have Gordon Ramsay yell at them till they cry. If they look or sound funny, that’s even better. One contestant this season has a serious weight problem, making insults so much easier, and another proudly earns the nickname ‘Forest Gump’.

There’s not a single contestant on the fifth season of “Hell’s Kitchen” that would survive even a single “Quickfire Challenge” on “Top Chef”. The focus of the Fox show is on the word “Hell’s,” not the word “Kitchen”.

To be fair, there are a few more promising chefs this season than in the last horrible season-long nightmare of “Hell’s Kitchen”. In fact, when the first challenge, making “your signature dish” for Chef Ramsay started off with three very highly praised dishes, it actually felt like maybe the producers had listened to complaints and tried to find a few honestly talented people. Of course, that’s short-lived and Ramsay was spitting out food and talking about “putting plastic wrap on his ass”.







Hell's Kitchen: Chef Gordon Ramsay turns up the heat in season 5 of Hell's Kitchen premiering Thursday, Jan. 29 (9:00-10:00 PM ET/PT) on FOX.  
Photo credit: Mike Yarish/FOX

Of course, like so many people who watch “Idol” to see Simon Cowell, the real star of “Hell's Kitchen” is Gordon Ramsay. He clearly knows that he’s trying to make good television, often setting up his chefs for failure and blowing situations out of proportion. For the former, he takes the woman with the best signature dish and makes her waitress on the first night, weakening the kitchen, and he takes the most awkward guy from the male team and sends him on the floor too. Neither decision would *ever* make for a good night at the restaurant. But it makes for good TV.

Most of you probably watch “American Idol”. It seems to be required if you own a television. So, your enjoyment of “Hell's Kitchen” can best be equated to which you like more, the auditions that garner ridicule and laughter from Simon, Paula, and Randy, or the people who can actually sing? If it's the former, “Hell's Kitchen” is for you, but don't kid yourself that it's not the same, cold dish from year to year.

There's a difference between reality shows like “Survivor” that make similar, fresh meals every year. “Hell's Kitchen” is just reheating leftovers.

*'Hell's Kitchen,' which airs on FOX, stars Gordon Ramsay. The fifth premiere airs on Thursday, January 29th, 2009 at 8PM CST.*



[15]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [16]  
Content Director  
HollywoodChicago.com  
[brian@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com) [15]

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 19 2024 - 12:28am):  
<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/6649/gordon-ramsay-s-overly-formulaic-hells-kitchen-has-grown-cold>

- Links:
- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>
  - [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
  - [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/cooking-show>
  - [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/fox>
  - [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/gordon-ramsay>
  - [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hells-kitchen>
  - [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
  - [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/television>
  - [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/top-chef>
  - [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
  - [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/survivor>
  - [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-amazing-race>
  - [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/project-runway>
  - [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/american-idol>
  - [15] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
  - [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>