



John Wilkerson
President

John Wilkerson became President of Olive Garden on September 1, 2025.

Previously, John served as President of Cheddar's Scratch Kitchen for seven years, where he successfully led the effort to rebuild the brand's operating fundamentals and set it up for growth.

A proven operator, John has demonstrated strong leadership with a track record of success throughout his 30-year career with Darden. Prior to Cheddar's, he served as President of Bahama Breeze, where he developed and executed against a strategic plan that continuously delivered same-restaurant sales growth, improved the guest experience and transformed the Bahama Breeze culture.



John began his career with Darden as an hourly crew member at Red Lobster before entering the Manager in Training (MIT) program and ultimately being promoted to General Manager. He transitioned to the Restaurant Support Center six years later as Sr. Financial Analyst for Red Lobster. But operations was always his passion — John has held multiple operations leadership roles over the course of his career.

John holds two Bachelor of Science degrees from the University of North Alabama — one in Finance and the other in Economics. He is also a Tuck Advanced Management Program graduate at The Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College.

Olive Garden is part of the Darden family of restaurants. Darden owns and operates more than 2,100 Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, Yard House, Ruth's Chris Steak House, Cheddar's Scratch Kitchen, The Capital Grille, Chuy's, Seasons 52, Eddie V's and Bahama Breeze restaurants in North America.