

Little Green Kitchen

Reviewed by Katie Roberts

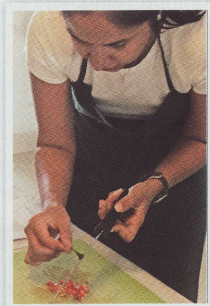
It's fair to say that after nearly five years, our family is officially in a food rut. Our loyal helper Fe has run out of ideas, and when pressed for suggestions the children (aged 11 and nine) nominate the same meat-heavy favourites (sausages, chops, hamburgers). I'm looking for a total re-invention of what we eat, without spending hours poring over foodie magazines.

As Aussies we are definitely partial to a good steak, but opting for a vegetarian cooking class ticks a number of food goal boxes: it's a cuisine that is healthy, cheap and quick to prepare and it provides an easy way to eat a lot more vegetables, and by default less meat.

Little Green Kitchen is a cooking studio started by Shalu Asnani, a former lawyer turned passionate foodie and health nut, with an obsession for vegetarian cuisine. Anyone can attend the classes – it's not exclusively for helpers; but as it's close to where I live, it was the obvious choice.

Here's what Fe experienced at two classes taught by Shalu at Little Green Kitchen.

Shalu demonstrates techniques for preparing each dish



Dishes cooked:

Class One: Light and tasty **Vietnamese** dishes perfect for this climate: rice-paper rolls with mango, cucumber, mint and *nuoc cham* dipping sauce; spicy lemongrass-marinated tofu with basil and roasted peanuts; Vietnamese savoury crepe stuffed with crispy vegetables and herbs.

Class Two: The **North Indian** classics that Shalu grew up with: chickpea curry with garden vegetables; okra and baby potatoes in a spicy masala; savoury lentil pancake.

Fe's verdict:

The two courses were fun, and interesting too. There was a mix of ages and nationalities at both classes. I like to cook and I learnt new things in both classes.

Miss Shalu is patient and easy to understand – she explained the techniques slowly, carefully demonstrated each dish and helped anyone who needed it.

Everything was easy to cook at home. The Vietnamese pancake took a few practices to get the technique right, but the result was definitely worth it.



The family's verdict:

Importantly, the recipes are based on fresh ingredients easily available at local wet markets, supplemented with items from the supermarket or Mustafa Centre.

The Vietnamese dishes were more popular with the children than the Indian ones. I was happily surprised when the kids devoured the pancake and rice paper rolls, although they avoided the dipping sauce. The tofu was a hit with the adults as the lemongrass flavours are very moreish.

We will definitely make both menus fortnightly to break up the usual routines, and sometimes add a meat-based dish, for those who feel like it.

Cost:

\$85 for a three-hour class (maximum six pupils per class). Private classes are \$250 for up to three people.

Where:

1 Hacienda Grove, Upper East Coast Road
9763 1483 | littlegreenkitchen.com.sg