

Eat Out

Edited by Ben

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Healthy birthday The happy campers with their proud creations at The Little Green Café

Cooking it up

From mastering tofu to rolling sushi, **Natasha Hong** and **Gwen Pew** round up the best cooking schools around town

BEST FOR GROUP COOKING Cookyn Inc

Billing itself as an events company with cooking classes as its main mode of business, as opposed to a full-on cooking school, Cookyn Inc near Farrer Park MRT is all about encouraging people to get together and bond as a team through food.

Set up by fine dining chef Mervyn Phan four years ago, the company has since organised over 500 cooking sessions for its clients, corporate and private. It's catered more for private events, so there aren't scheduled cooking classes you can pay to attend. Instead, speak to their consultants about organising a Cookyn Inc Social Party that's ideal for groups of ten to 20 friends to celebrate a birthday, reunion or a tame hen party.

The three-and-a-half-hour customised class (from \$100/per person) includes a tutorial and a hands-on execution of simple,

customised recipes that require a team to work together to complete, plus free-flow non-alcoholic drinks and finally, a sit-down meal with wine.

221 Rangoon Rd (6748 4848, www.cookyn-inc.com). ☎ Farrer Park. From \$100/person.

BEST FOR THE HEALTH CONSCIOUS The Little Green Café

When former-lawyer-turned-chef Shalu Asnani returned from a four-year stint teaching vegetarian cooking in Beijing in 2011, she decided that she wanted to continue her passion in Singapore – and so The Little Green Café was born. Each individual class usually lasts around three hours and sees students make three dishes in a particular cuisine or style (such as Thai, Festive, tapas or 30-minute meals), as well as pick up skills on preparation, balancing flavours, cooking, serving and presentation.

Asnani recommends that students sign up at least a week or two in advance, especially since classes like

Indian Cuisine and Mastering Tofu fill up very quickly. Classes are kept to a maximum of six people so that everyone can get a more hands-on experience, but private classes for special occasions are also available.

And don't worry if you're a die-hard carnivore – Asnani's fantastic recipes will certainly convince you that greens aren't always mean.

1 Hacienda Grove, Upper East Coast Rd (9763 1483, www.littlegreencafe.com.sg). Take a taxi. From \$75.

BEST FOR FINE DINING TECHNIQUES My Private Pantry

Eating out at fine-dining restaurants may not be for everyone's wallets – so My Private Pantry is the go-to place for learning how to replicate the fancy cuisine from your favourite restaurant in your own kitchen.

Tapping on their black book of industry friends, owners Crystal Chua and chef Stephan Zois! organise advanced cooking and food prep classes conducted by the Fat Duck-trained Zois! and well-known professional chefs like Delicacie Group executive chef Damien Le Bihan, Gattopardo chef/owner Lino Sauro and Peranakan cuisine extraordinaire, Violet Oon. Cooking demonstrations

span a wide range of cuisines and techniques, from Italian to Spanish and Modernist. Prices start from \$28 for a lunchtime demo with tasting plates, to \$188 for a practical session at My Private Pantry's kitchen (decked out with top-of-the-line appliances from Gaggenau, Bosch and Silit) on the sleepy Tras Street.

Setting themselves apart from other cooking schools, My Private Pantry also conducts market-to-kitchen classes (\$188). Tutored by Oon and Eric Low, they allow participants to watch the chefs in their element at a local wet market, before schooling them on Singaporean dishes like hokkien mee, chicken rice or bubur cha cha.

61 Tras St (6224 4050, myprivatepantry.sgsp.com). ☎ Tanjong Pagar. \$28-\$188.

BEST FOR SUSHI LOVERS Tokyo Sushi Academy Singapore

Following the success of its school in Japan, Tokyo Sushi Academy was launched in Singapore in April this year, aiming to teach both professional and beginner chefs the intricate – and delicious – art of Japanese cuisine.

An intensive course that spans a period of up to four weeks costs between \$2,000 and \$2,400, and students can learn everything from preparing rice to the proper way of handling various knives. But for those who just want to try their hand at sushi-making, the one-off leisure classes are probably more suitable and affordable – choose from their hands-on nigiri sushi, 'art rolls' and hot dishes classes, which cost \$90 to \$180.

An evening class targeted at office workers also just started last month and costs \$60. All classes are currently taught in English by Junichi Asano, a professional chef who spent over 15 years in Europe as master chef of the Japanese Embassy.

#B2-17 Chinatown Point, 133 New Bridge Rd (6444 7828, www.sushiacademy.sg). ☎ Chinatown. \$60-\$2,400.

BEST FOR CASUAL COOKS ToTT

Housed in one of Asia's largest kitchen supplies stores is the Tools of The Trade's (ToTT) Cooking Studio, which features 12 Gaggenau and Bosch-fitted counters. On the schedule here is a wide and varied range of hands-on and sometimes brand-endorsed demonstration classes that teach anything from everyday healthy cooking to exotic cuisines and faddish desserts like rainbow cheesecakes. Chef instructors are picked for their smarts in imparting their skills to novice or enthusiast budding chefs, and include names like The Prime Society's executive chef Dallas Cuddy in ToTT's packed schedule of weekday and weekend morning and afternoon classes.

#01-01A Sime Darby Centre, 896 Dunearn Rd (6219 7077, www.tottstore.com). Take a taxi. \$38-\$168.



Tokyo Sushi Academy Singapore