

Learning from the world's best

An explosion of interest in cooking schools has been good news for those with a taste for gastronomic pleasures and a touch of wanderlust. The result is a proliferation of uniquely located culinary classes and tours to accommodate just about any niche interest – be it perfecting traditional Japanese home-style dishes or learning the secrets of using regional produce from Mexico's Yucatan area.

Sarina Lewis chooses her five best.



ENGLAND Padstow Seafood School

A view of the water, a course created by top chefs and an insight into the delicate art of seafood cooking make this cooking school a hot destination for seafood aficionados. Participate in a one-dish workshop, a full-day crash course in fish and shellfish cookery, a how-to lesson in Madras fish curry or a skills workshop that covers everything from hot smoking and fish filleting to making classic sauces or studying simple butchery and carving. Every course culminates in a beautiful lunch. Lessons are taught in a room walled by windows overlooking the estuary.

rickstein.com

Food with a view:
A class at the Padstow
Seafood School.



JAPAN Taste of Culture

We all know sushi and sashimi, and even the most basic of Australian home cooks may now be confident making a California roll. But not all Japanese food is so well known. For those seeking a keener insight into home-style food, this is an ideal course. The focus is on teaching preparation of *washoku* meals to small groups using a combination of traditional and modern equipment; think classic Japanese rolled omelettes (*tamagoyaki*), *dashi* broth and explanations surrounding traditional ingredients. Take-home recipes and starter kit included.

tasteofculture.com



MEXICO Culinary Adventures

Why spend hours lining up for a taste of soft tacos in Mexican-mad Australia when you can fly to the Latin American nation and learn the secrets behind the cuisine for yourself? Next stop? Yucatan and a look at the traditional foods of the Maya alongside more modern dish interpretations. Sample *sikil-pák* (a dip made with pumpkin seeds) and learn to cook with regional ingredients like *recado* seasoning paste. Trips also include cultural side excursions to some major archeological sites as well as time to try some unique dishes from local eateries.

culinaryadventuresinc.com



FRANCE Les Petits Farcis

When is a French cooking school not just another French cooking school? When it is run in the home of a long-time expat and Francophile in the heart of the Mediterranean wonderland that is Nice. Learn to prepare a classic *Nicois* meal in a 17th century apartment, but only after touring the local *Cours Saleya* market for the day's best produce and a rosé to put on chill for later. The cooking school has a focus on organic food sourced from farms in the hills behind Nice, perhaps fist-sized artichokes or Menton lemons. Cooking courses run for a full day. For those more interested in eating than cooking, the school also hosts three-hour street food tours of the city.

petitsfarcis.com



MOROCCO Culinary Adventures

Perhaps the best cooking classes are those that incorporate an understanding of the culture as well as the cuisine. This is one of those courses. The tour guides and cooking mentors leading these tours of Morocco are heavily invested in identifying local places and people that can give a real insight for those keen to learn. A travelling education, the cooking classes take in tours with local chefs in a succession of picturesque locations – from learning the secrets of lamb, fig and walnut tagine in the Atlas Mountains to exploring the famed *Djenaa el Fna* markets in Marakech, followed by lessons in *pastilla* and the use of spices.

peggymarkel.com

