



July 2009

Taste of Queensland's cooking schools

Queensland offers a delicious range of cooking schools where the emphasis is on learning new techniques in a relaxed environment (always with a great view!) and making the most of the freshest local produce. Here's a taste of what's on offer around the State:

SUNSHINE COAST

Buderim Ginger Cooking School

The Buderim Ginger Cooking School at Yandina on the Sunshine Coast has recently introduced a monthly schedule of practical, hands-on cooking classes to help cooking enthusiasts make the most of fresh local produce.

Executive Chef Andrew Strange operates a purpose built commercial grade kitchen to cater for groups of up to 24, at four person workstations. There are programs for beginners, intermediate and advanced cooks, and the subject matter is regularly updated. Andrew's winter 2009 line up includes: The Flavours of Morocco – Traditional Tangines; three course entertaining for Winter nights; The Ancient Art of Soup; Gluten free Winter menu. There are also international cuisine special events planned, including The Flavours of Africa, and A Journey Through France. Classes include all ingredients, recipe cards, a souvenir apron, and a sit down meal with a glass of wine. www.buderimgingercookingschool.com.au

Free Classes at Eumundi Markets

Free cooking classes hosted by chef Peter Wolfe are proving popular at the Eumundi Markets on the Sunshine Coast.

The classes are held at 10am and 11am each Wednesday in the food and produce precinct of the market. As founder of Cedar Creek Farm Bush Foods in Belli Park, Peter is renowned for his kitchen wizardry, and for his exciting recipes incorporating bush foods and organic ingredients. His market cooking demonstrations highlight the quality and diversity of locally grown produce on sale each week at the markets. It's hard to imagine a more vibrant location for a cooking class – the colours, the music, and the upbeat market buzz all combine to provide a pretty unique backdrop for Peter's demonstrations and lessons. www.eumundimarkets.com.au

Spirit House serves up Asian cooking lessons

The award-winning Spirit House Restaurant at Yandina in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland offers a range of Asian-influenced cooking classes culminating in a meal enjoyed in a tropical dining pavilion.

The restaurant's talented chefs lead a range of hands on classes that will soon have you whipping up Asian salads and seafood, Thai Royal cuisine or one bowl wonders. Enjoy the tranquil rainforest setting and exotic gardens while you learn how to prepare restaurant quality food at home. The four and a half hour classes include lunch or dinner with wine or beer. www.spirithouse.com.au

Jan@Home, Buderim

Nestled in the foot hills of beautiful Buderim on the Sunshine Coast, Jan@Home is teaching people how to cook up a storm.

Mediterranean, Asian and Dinner Party cooking classes are on offer for guests, who learn to prepare and cook a three-course meal in their chosen speciality. The day kicks off at 9:30am with a light morning tea before learning basic knife and kitchen skills and cooking the fixed menu. Enjoy the meal you have created with a relaxed lunch on the beautiful large timber deck with a complimentary glass of wine or beer. The cooking classes are set in a home environment amongst the Buderim tree tops and caters for a maximum of four people per class.

www.janathome.com.au

The Tamarind – reopening early 2010

Currently closed for extension and redevelopment, the Tamarind is due to reopen early next year.

Set amidst the rolling hills and rainforest of Maleny in the Sunshine Coast, The Tamarind Cookery Retreat's chef Paul Blain (ex Darley Street Thai) teaches the art of authentic Thai cuisine. When the retreat reopens, participants will learn the fundamentals of Thai food and ingredients before preparing and enjoying a banquet lunch. Guests have the option of staying in the Tamarind's luxury five-star bungalows. www.thetamarind.com.au

BRISBANE AND SURROUNDS

James Street Cooking School

Located in inner-city Fortitude Valley, seafood, beef and bush tucker are just some of the cooking tips covered in the day classes.

And what's more, the participants can buy their produce fresh from the local markets before transforming it into fabulous meals at the hands-on and demonstration style cooking classes. JSCS also runs day trips in the South East Queensland region combining local produce experience with an afternoon of cooking at a local restaurant. www.jamesstcookingschool.com.au.

Black Pearl Epicure

Similarly, students at Black Pearl Epicure can buy their products beforehand - this time downstairs in the inner city premises of one of Australia's finest purveyors of foods.

They then return upstairs to the cooking school and learn how to use them. As well as offering a Guest Chef Series, owner Babak Hadi gives pantry tours where you can taste and learn about culinary delights such as cheese, caviar and chocolate. www.blackpearl.com.au.

Mondo Organics

The cooking classes at Mondo Organics at West End are conducted by award-winning chef and partner of Mondo, Dominique Rizzo.

Students can expect an energetic, hands-on approach, learning the fundamental skills of cooking with organics, improving their health and becoming aware of the diverse choices available. Classes are designed to cater for vegetarian and meat eaters (unless specified) and are generally for 10 to 14 people. www.mondo-organics.com.au.

Executive Chef, South Brisbane

Executive Chef's cooking school offers regular day and evening classes, most of which are hosted by local food guru, Jacki Passmore.

The classes include kitchen basics, which start from stocking the pantry and work through to cooking a soufflé, gourmet meals and Chinese cooking. Demonstration classes with guest presenters are included in the schedule and children's cooking classes are offered during school holidays. www.execchef.com.

New England Larder

Discover how to cook and preserve the best seasonal produce of the Southern Downs with Geoff Metcalf at the New England Larder at Glen Aplin.

Geoff's cooking classes have become a monthly event in the region and are also run by arrangement for groups of four to eight people. Geoff also conducts social and corporate demonstration dinners which, where possible, feature local produce. The concept is based on showcasing the quality and variety of products available in the region and using them to create a regional cuisine. www.newenglandlarder.com.au

Wild Lime Cooking School

Learn how to fuse 'wild' food in fusion with Asian and Mediterranean cuisine at the Wild Lime Cooking School at Worendo, a one and a half hour scenic drive from Brisbane or Gold Coast.

After the two hour class, enjoy the scenery and feast on your newly-created dishes, complemented by local wines. Wild Lime also offers a cook-and-stay package combining cooking school and one night's accommodation for two in its B&B. www.worendo.com

GOLD COAST

Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort and Spa

The award-winning team of chefs at the Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort and Spa are back again to teach, trick, tantalise and tempt taste buds at the popular Benihana cooking classes.

The resort's Benihana Japanese Steakhouse is one of the Gold Coast's most popular teppanyaki restaurants and is renowned for its teppan trickster chefs. The cooking classes teach guests how to utilise Japanese-style cooking in their own homes while making the most out of fresh, nutritious ingredients. www.marriott.com.au/hotels/travel/oolsp-surfers-paradise-marriott-resort-and-spa/

Michelin-standard Master Classes at Absynthe

Keen cooks can now learn the art of modern French cooking at Absynthe, Surfers Paradise.

Star chef Meyjitte Boughenout is offering hands-on cooking classes to people who want to learn the professional art of preparation and presentation. French-born Meyjitte has won numerous awards in Australia and scored two Michelin Stars as head chef at a prestigious Belgian restaurant. He now shares his skills by teaching cooking in a fully functioning restaurant kitchen. Participants spend 20 hours with Mayjitte over four days in the kitchen at Absynthe. Students work alongside him and his team in the kitchen from 2pm to 7pm Monday to Thursday. The hands-on Master Classes covers produce selection, recipe creation, and presentation. www.absynthe.com.au.

CAIRNS

King of the Grill Barbecue Cooking School, Cairns

Learn the secrets of the perfect Aussie barbecue and become "king of the grill" at a barbecue cooking class in tropical Cairns.

The King of the Grill Barbecue cooking classes are held on Sundays at the Rydges Plaza Hotel's outdoor barbecue area. Classes are designed to teach you how to prepare, cook and present a variety of barbecue meals and appetisers, and include a seven-course meals and recipe book. Classes are available for a maximum 20, and special backpacker classes are available at a reduced cost on Sunday lunchtimes and Wednesday evenings. www.kingofthegrill.com.au