



top five

SPRING COOKING

WORKSHOPS

KRISTIE LAU

There's a master chef in all of us

1 GREEKALICIOUS

Greekalicious founder Maria Benardis reckons there is just one instruction to follow when cooking Greek food – avoid measuring cups. “People freak out when they hear numbers and spoonfuls but Greek food is so simple you don't need them,” she says. “You just have to taste everything as you go.” With her over-the-top hand gestures and infectious passion for food, Benardis is this workshop's star attraction. And it's not just souvlaki on Benardis's menu. Greekalicious offers tuition in the art of stuffing – think juicy vegies crammed with mince and nuts – as well as classes on all those colourful, delicious dips, the names of which we rarely know. For a full list of classes and prices, see greekalicious.com.au.
LEVEL 1, 70 BRONTE ROAD, BONDI JUNCTION, (02) 9331 0734.

2 SYDNEY SEAFOOD SCHOOL

If a beef stir-fry is all you've mastered in the kitchen, this cooking school may be right up your alley. Sydney Seafood School manager Roberta Muir says the school aims to show amateur cooks how easy it is to plate up dishes such as abalone, pipis and, if they're feeling brave, sea snails. “I've seen people who don't even know how to slice an onion,” Muir says, “but they soon realise seafood is one of the easiest foods to cook up.” The cooking studios were recently renovated but Muir says it's their new-found cooking skills that really impress students. “Being able to cook chilli crab and seafood barbecues for friends, that's what people love.” For more details see sydneyfishmarket.com.au.
LEVEL 1, WATERFRONT ARCADE, SYDNEY FISH MARKETS, BANK STREET, PYRMONT, (02) 9004 1111.

3 THE CIRA COOKING SCHOOL

Don't miss the Council of Italian Restaurants in Australia's (CIRA) pop-up Italian cooking workshops. Led by popular local head chefs including Armando Percuoco from Paddington's Buon Ricordo restaurant, these classes are ideal for lovers of rich, high-carbohydrate foods. Besides pasta, chefs will chat about what's hot and not in terms of good Italian food in Sydney. Check out details about the three remaining classes at cira.com.au.
CASA BARILLA, 4 ANNANDALE STREET, ANNANDALE. 0405 286 067.

4 CHEEKY FOOD GROUP

As the name suggests, food isn't taken quite so seriously at this cooking workshop. Cheeky aims to highlight the fun factor in cooking so, not surprisingly, these classes are popular during spring when hens' and bucks' bashes book out the studio weeks in advance. If you can secure a spot, don't forget your camera. With class titles such as “Sexy Spanish and Tapas” and “Sultry Italian Feasts”, there's bound to be some Kodak moments. See cheekyfoodgroup.com.
LEVEL 1, 65 FOVEAUX STREET, SURRY HILLS, 1300 785 365.



5 THAI HOME COOKING CLASSES

Thailand-born Athita Tesamarth offers a deal that's too good to refuse: you provide the kitchen and she will share her wisdom. Her travelling cooking workshop is based on the culinary traditions of northern Thailand. Tesamarth says her love for cooking stems from watching her grandmother flog noodles at a roadside stall in Thailand. Nowadays, Tesamarth teaches classes up to four times a week and her noodles win rave reviews.
PHONE (02) 9818 2537.



Kitchen whiz ... (from top) Sydney Seafood School; Cheeky Food Group; a Santorini salad, with caper leaves and anchovies, from Greekalicious. Photos: Janie Barrett, James Alcock