



Bon Appétit

FIONA SYMINGTON-MITCHELL finds out where you can learn how to cook like a local at France's best English-speaking cooking schools.

Inspired by the seasonal abundance of France's markets, culinary heritage and the French appreciation for the daily pleasures of life, female cooks have long been drawn to France.

Today's fraternity of expat women cooks continue the tradition started by cookery writers MFK Fisher, Elizabeth David and Julia Child, who also founded a cooking school, L'Ecole des Trois Gourmandes, during her time in Paris. From their kitchens in stone farmhouses, châteaux and regional towns, they share their passion for French cooking, offering classes in English that range from afternoon courses to residential five-day stays. With excursions to local markets, wine tastings, lessons in regional cuisines and classic cooking techniques, an afternoon or week is spent living *comme les Françaises*.

From farm to table

"Our business really focuses on the local farmers here in Burgundy. More than any other region, it is really rooted in the tradition of small producers," share Marjorie Taylor and Kendall Smith Franchini of The Cook's Atelier. For ten years, this mother-and-daughter team have welcomed eager food enthusiasts and amateur cooks to their culinary workshops in Beaune that combine their professional backgrounds in food and wine.

A family-run business, the atelier has grown into a cooking school, culinary boutique and wine store after a move to a renovated 19th-century building in 2013. Downstairs, Kendall's husband Laurent manages the shop and café, while Marjorie and Kendall teach upstairs. There are fresh flowers and candles throughout, as well as vintage kitchenware and copperware for sale. In the light-filled dining area on the third floor, monogrammed vintage napkins decorate the zinc-topped table. Such is the conviviality of this neighbourhood place that locals arrive for tastings and to buy wine sourced from small independent wineries across France, Italy and Germany.

At the atelier, classes range from a one-day market course to a five-day seasonal program, with Marjorie and Kendall inspiring students with dishes like green garlic soufflé and *pot-au-feu*. Visits to the local market are combined with classes focused on French cooking techniques including butchery, sauces and pastry. Time is also spent with local farmers, cheesemongers and winemakers. >>



IMAGES
All images this spread
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Celebrating the seasons

“The market is a great teacher in seasonality,” says Lucy Vanel of Plum Lyon Teaching Kitchen, adding that for many of her students, the experience of *la cuisine du marché* is often a new one.

Specialising in *pâtisserie* and Lyonnaise cooking, Lucy starts her market table classes at La Croix-Rousse, the city’s largest outdoor market, where there is always something new to discover. Depending on the time of year, there will be white asparagus, freshly pressed walnut oil, local mushrooms (some only available for two weeks a year) or sun-kissed zucchini flowers.

Back at her teaching kitchen, students spend the day cooking dishes based on their market finds using recipes reflecting Lucy’s fascination with this most gastronomic of cities. A French-certified *pâtissier*, she also teaches vintage classics like *la religieuse* (using techniques of *choux*, *craquelin*, *crème patissière*, *fondant* and *crème au beurre*) as well as *viennoiserie* like croissants and *pains au chocolat*.

Regional cooking

“Everything is technicolour here,” says Rosa Jackson of her adopted home in Nice, where she moved after ten years in Paris working as a food writer and conducting food tours. At her cooking school, Les Petits Farcis, she specialises in niçoise cuisine – the city’s rustic Mediterranean food influenced by Provence and nearby Italy. Classes begin at Cours Saleya market, before students learn dishes like *socca* (street food made with chickpea flour and traditionally cooked in a wood-fired oven), *pissaladière* (a caramelised onion, anchovy and olive tart) and, of course, *petits farcis* (roasted stuffed vegetables).

A taste of French life

“When you cook together and eat together, you will inevitably end up being friends. This is what the French have understood for a long time,” Rosa Jackson says of French cuisine.

What is shared by these women cooks goes beyond recipes and cooking techniques. They teach *l’art de vivre à la Française* – the pleasures of the table, the simple joy that can be found at a market, and how every meal is something to be savoured and shared. ♣

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Page 36, main image: *pissaladière* @ Les Petits Farcis 2018
• bottom, left to right: cooking class @ Les Petits Farcis 2018
• strawberry workshop @ Plum Teaching Kitchen 2018
• page 37: Rosa Jackson @ Les Petits Farcis 2018

TEN OF THE BEST

Marjorie Taylor and Kendall Smith Franchini:

In April 2018, the duo publish their first cookbook *The Cook’s Atelier*, celebrating their life in Burgundy. Day classes cost €295 pp. thecooksatelier.com

Mimi Thorrisson: Mimi, of famed blog Manger, runs three-day workshops from her home in the middle of the vineyards in Saint-Yzans-de-Médoc, 57km from Bordeaux. €2,000 pp. mimithorisson.com

Makenna Held: The former summer home of Julia Child, La Pitchoune, in Provence is now a cooking school run by this Cordon Bleu-trained chef. €3,073 pp. lapeetch.com

Susan Herrmann Loomis: The author of *French Farmhouse Cookbook* and other titles offers three- and five-day classes and country lunches from her home in Louviers, Normandy. A three-day class costs €2,000 onruetatin.com

Kate Hill: At her 18th-century home, Camont, Kate offers classes such as her five-day Classic Gascony program (€3,950), where she teaches guests to make *confit de canard*, *foie gras* and *cassoulet*. kitchen-at-camont.com

Patricia Wells: Four-time James Beard Award winner, author and teacher, Patricia hosts cooking workshops from her homes in Paris and Provence. €650 for six days. patriciawells.com

Sinéad Allard: Irish-born Sinéad introduces her guests to the culinary bounty of Normandy from her farmhouse kitchen. €1,350 pp, based on two people sharing, for a six-day course. wildekitchen.net

Lucy Vanel: Market table, pastry and private classes in *la cuisine Lyonnaise* are all offered by this Syracuse-raised *pâtissier*. Prices range from €90 for pastry workshops to €180 for the market table class. plumlyon.com

Rosa Jackson: From her adopted home in Nice, Rosa combines market tours with cooking classes. Prices start at €90 for single cooking classes. petitsfarcis.com

Mary Pochez: At Château de La Barbée, this Californian-born cook hosts residential courses on the art of French cuisine, using family recipes. €1,600 for a four-day program, including accommodation. lavieduchateau.com

