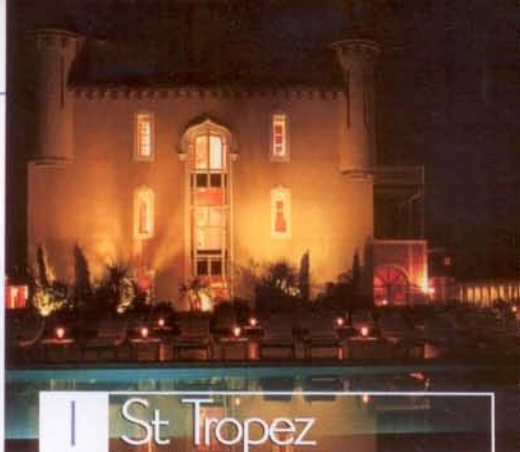


TOP 10 BEST COOKERY SCHOOLS

JOIN SOME OF THE WORLD'S TOP CHEFS FOR THE ULTIMATE HOLIDAY OF TASTE



1 St Tropez

The **Château de la Messardière** is set in a 20-acre pine forest overlooking the bay of St Tropez and the beaches of Pampelonne in the south of France. There can be few better places to learn about French cuisine than this cookery school run by chef Franck-Louis Broc. Each morning, you'll gather herbs in the gardens before learning how to prepare and incorporate them into dishes that you can feast on later. Then, at the end of a hard day chained to the stove, you can dine on the flower-filled terrace while someone else cooks for you.

■ For more information, contact *Leading Hotels Of The World* on 0800-181123.



2 Tuscany

A course run by the **Italian Cookery Week** company is both entertaining and educational. Lessons are interspersed with excursions to nearby towns, tasting sessions and free time to laze by the pool or take a siesta. You'll be staying at the **Montebello**, a restored 18th-century farmhouse in Bolsena with a kitchen that opens on to a terrace and a garden filled with fig trees and blackberries. Try your hand at making pasta, risottos and desserts in true Italian style. The courses are real group events and the final creations are served for dinner on the lawn.

■ To book, call 020-8208 0112, or visit www.italian-cookery-weeks.co.uk.



6 Bali

The cookery school at the **Four Seasons Jimbaran Bay** resort in Bali has the sort of kitchen we all dream of: black granite work surfaces, teak tables and air conditioning. Here you'll learn the secrets of Asian and Indonesian cuisine, including how to pick local produce and spices. You'll also get an insight into the finer nuances of Balinese entertaining; for example, how to create beautiful handmade table decorations and choose the perfect wine to accompany your meal. Your accommodation is in a private villa with plunge pool – perfect for cooling off after a day at the cooker.

■ To book, call *Four Seasons* on 00800-64886488, or visit www.fourseasons.com.



7 Great Milton

There are few places in England as renowned for their cuisine as Oxfordshire's **Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons**, owned by superchef Raymond Blanc. Gourmet food courses at his *Ecole de Cuisine* are run by the school's director, Stephen Bulmer, who helps wannabe cooks to improve their skills, and reveals the secrets of *Monsieur Blanc's* kitchen.

■ *Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons* is offering *Journal* readers a one-night break for two (Sunday to Thursday) for £225 per person, including a seven-course *Menu Gourmand* dinner, twin accommodation and breakfast, plus a free gift bag. To book, call 01844-278881 and mention the *Journal* offer. Subject to availability.



3 West Virginia

The Culinary Arts Centre situated at **The Greenbrier** resort in White Sulphur Springs is so comprehensive it could turn even the most hapless cook into a kitchen guru. Regular and guest chefs from the best restaurants in the USA demonstrate different types of cooking and will whip you into shape. Sample regional American cuisine, including barbecues, or take a gourmet cooking class. Choose from a single day course, a weekend or longer.

■ For reservations, call *The Greenbrier* resort on 001-304 536 1110 or *Wentworth Travel* on 01344-844541, or visit www.greenbrier.com.

4 Marrakech

The Rhode School of Cuisine, with locations in France and Italy, opens a new school in Dar Liqama later this year. This luxurious eight-bedroom palazzo, with views of the Atlas mountains, is situated in four acres of manicured botanical gardens. Cookery classes focus on Moroccan cuisine: tajine stews bubbling over hot coals, and exotic seafood cooked in the outdoor clay oven. And thanks to the glorious North African climate, you will cook and dine alfresco, enjoying the informal atmosphere that this school is so well known for.

■ For reservations, call 01428-685140, or visit www.rhodeschoolofcuisine.com.

5 Turnberry

The Ailsa Cooking School at the **Westin Turnberry Resort** on the Ayrshire coast runs three-day cookery courses under the guidance of some of Britain's leading chefs. Whether you're an enthusiastic beginner or a keen cook, you'll learn about the best of modern Scottish cuisine, as well as stylish English food, including baking. The price of the course covers accommodation, all meals and use of the hotel's spa. And if you can't take the heat, get out of the kitchen and escape to nearby Culzean Castle for some relaxation and sightseeing.

■ For reservations, call the *Westin Turnberry Resort* on 01655-331000.



8 Padstow

Fish is often overlooked in British cuisine, partly due to the unreliable availability of fresh produce. But this isn't a problem in Padstow, a small but productive port in Cornwall, where you'll find **Rick Stein's Seafood School**. The one- and four-day courses taught by Rick's head chef, Paul, are extremely popular and it is advisable to book well in advance. You'll lose your inhibitions after a couple of hours here, learning how to clean and prepare your catch, ways in which to cook it and the sauces to go with it. Accommodation is in a choice of nearby hotels or B&Bs.

■ To book, call 01841-532700, or email seafoodschool@rickstein.com.

9 County Cork

The **Ballymaloe Cookery School** is the baby of Ireland's adored celebrity chef Darina Allen and her husband, Tim. The couples' enthusiasm is contagious, so it's not hard to see why people enrol on their courses, which run from one day to 12 weeks. The school has its own 130-acre organic farm, which keeps the Ballymaloe estate self-sufficient for most of the year. Accommodation is in cosy cottages located in the grounds. This is Irish cooking at its very best, so be prepared to loosen your belt a few notches: cream and butter feature heavily in this irresistible cookery programme.

■ To book, call 00-353 21 4646 785, or visit www.ballymaloe.com.

10 Aldeburgh

For all the hopeless (or hopeful) male cooks you know, salvation is here in the shape of a **Men In The Kitchen** course at the **Aldeburgh Cookery School** in Suffolk. A one-day or weekend course will be enough to boost confidence and improve skills. Classes are part hands-on and part demonstration, but they're not solely educational; there's a lot of humour and a little male bonding thrown in for good measure. The nearby **Wentworth Hotel** is the best place to stay.

■ To book, call 01728-454039, or visit www.aldeburghcookeryschool.com. For accommodation, call the *Wentworth Hotel* on 01728-452312.