

What's For Dinner? Classes To Expand Your Culinary Talents

By Karen McBride

Looking for something to do as a couple or with some of your girlfriends? Tired of the same old dinner and a movie date night? What if dinner was the entertainment? Or more specifically, cooking the dinner was the entertainment?

Cooking shows have found a home among all the reality shows. Chefs are competing to be the next "Food Network Star" and battling it out with "Cupcake Wars". Americans are becoming more intrigued by the art of cooking. The recession could be part of the infatuation, because people are eating at home more in an effort to save money. Boredom with the same old meals may be another factor and is a great motivator to learn a new recipe. There are several places in our area that give you the opportunity to hone your cooking

skills.

Publix Aprons offers cooking classes covering a wide variety of food. Decadent Chocolate will be held September 15, at 6:30 pm. The cost is \$45. This class is not just for desserts as the title may indicate. Chocolate can be used in a variety of main dishes, including Chile-Cocoa Spiced Shrimp with White Chocolate-Parsnip Puree; Duck Breast with Port-Chocolate Barbecue and Sweet Potato Hash Browns; Ancho Pork Tenderloin with Mole Poblano and Brussels Sprouts Gratin; and Chocolate-Chai Pot de Crème with Candied Pistachios.

Is your guy more of a meat and potatoes man? Aprons offers a Summer Grilling class for \$40. The next one will be held on September 8 at 6:00 pm. The menu will include Grilled and Chilled Shrimp Cocktail; Grilled Corn and Potato Salad; Chicken Under



Take a cooking class at BergHOFF and learn how to make wonderful dishes like this yummy Paella Salad

Bricks; Grilled Zucchini Fries; and Bourbon Glazed Grilled Figs.

Other classes include Pairing Topics (finding the right wine to go with your meal), Cooking Techniques, Kids Topics (ages 8-12) and Teens Topics (ages 13-18).

For some one-on-one quality time with your child, sign up for Parents and Kids Do Desserts. The price is

\$70 (per parent/child). The menu will include Balsamic Berries with Sabayon; Custard Pie with Toasted Coconut Meringue; Red Velvet Cupcakes with White Chocolate Cream Cheese Frosting; and Fruit Cobbler with Buttermilk Ice Cream.

Aprons is located on the second floor in Publix at Shoppes of Citrus

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Park, 7835 Gunn Highway, Tampa. For information on upcoming classes, visit www.publix.com/aprons/schools/Tampa/Calendar.do or call 926-4465.

Cooking enthusiasts may be familiar with the high quality cookware offered by BergHOFF. The store, located at 11063 SR 54 in Odessa, started as a buyers' showroom for wholesalers. The popularity of the durable, ceramic pots and pans grew and BergHOFF opened their store to the public five years ago. They decided to offer cooking classes as a benefit for their customers. Classes are kept to a maximum of 12 people around a horseshoe shaped kitchen.

During the Summer Salad class, each group was assigned one of five salads to create - Paella Salad, Asian Chicken Salad, Vegetarian Pasta Salad, Swiss Cheese Salad, and Thai Pork/Noodle Salad. The relaxed atmosphere felt as if you were sitting around the kitchen with good friends, enjoying a feast, a glass of wine, and Chef Toni

Haynes offering valuable cooking tips along the way. "We all learn from each other. It's a wonderful give and take," said Haynes, who has been in the culinary business for over 35 years. She passes along tips that you won't find in a typical recipe. Using tomato and garlic pastes in tubes, rather than cans, because the shelf life is longer, crushing herbs by rolling them in your hands before adding to release the flavor, and baking rice in the oven so that it won't be sticky, are just a few. The large number of returning students is a good indication of how many people enjoy Chef Toni's classes. Sanitation is a priority and Chef Toni instructs students on the proper way to handle food to avoid cross contamination.

Upcoming cooking classes include International Sliders on September 8. Culinary delights from around the world - Italian, French, and Greek dishes. The class is taught by Chef Toni. In addition to cooking at BergHOFF,

Chef Toni has had her own catering business, wrote two cookbooks and was an instructor at the Annual Culinary Festival in Wisconsin and at USF for the Lifelong Learning Division.

On September 22, at 12:00, Classic Fall Desserts will be taught by Cathleen Ryan. She is the Pastry Chef/Instructor at the Jacobson Culinary Arts Academy at Tarpon Springs High School. The two-hour class includes a menu of Almond Cakes with Muscatine Grapes, French Apple Turnovers, French Butter Cookies, Chocolate Espresso Torte, Candied Pumpkin Kataifi and Calvados Sorbet. Private cooking classes are offered for business



Or a wonderful Asian Chicken Salad

events and clubs. So keep this in mind when planning your next office party. For more information on classes at BergHOFF, call 727-853-3373 or visit www.icookALOT.com.

Whether you are a beginning chef, leaving your family questioning if your concoction is even edible; experienced and at ease in the kitchen; or just looking for a fun afternoon with friends, sign up for a cooking class in our area and expand your culinary talents.

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Healingtouchskincare.com for class descriptions and a full calendar of events!

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