



STRATFORD
CHEFS
SCHOOL

*Where the
Best Chefs
Train* SINCE 1983

SCS Cooking Fundamentals | 14 Class Series

Week 1: Kitchen Introduction

Week 2: Boiling

The series begins with boiling; a safe and simple method of cooking with a self-regulating temperature. Liquid is boiling when it is rolling vigorously, and bubbles break frequently on its surface. Water, the most widely used liquid for this method of cooking, boils at 100°C (212°F). In practice, there are slow, medium and fast boils. It is necessary to adjust the level of the boil to suit the food being cooked — if boiled too hard the ingredients may deteriorate; if boiled too low, foodstuffs may stick to the pot.

From polenta to risotto, salads to soup, learn a variety of recipes dedicated to the method of boiling.

Recipes:

- Leek Risotto with Smoked Trout, Squash and Chilli Oil
- Soup au Pistou
- Classic Niçoise Salad
- Polenta Two Ways with Fresh Ricotta

Week 3: Poaching & Sous Vide

Whereas boiling involves immersing foods in an active, sputtering liquid, poaching requires a gentler approach. The temperature of the cooking liquid is much lower: it does not bubble but trembles and shivers delicately; a welcome bath for fragile foods. This refined method is more challenging to master than boiling as it requires more attention to the regulation of temperature and movement.

Recipes:

- Sous Vide White Chopped Chicken with a Ginger and Tomato Salad
- Confit Chicken Thigh with a 63 Degree Egg, Sushi Rice, Quick Pickles, Kimchi and Garnishes
- Poached Trout with a Fennel-Lentil Medley and Brown Butter Caper Sauce
- Poached Pear with Ginger Anglaise and Hazelnut Financier

Week 4: Pan-Frying

Pan frying is a dry-heat method of cooking that relies on oil or fat as the heat transfer medium, and on correct temperature and time to not overcook or burn the food. Pan-frying differs from sautéing in several important ways. Pan frying takes place at lower heat and longer cooking time. Although both involve cooking portion-size items of food over relatively high heat, pan-frying requires more fat because the food is not moved very much. The results should be an attractive crisp textured food with a moist interior.

Recipes:

- Seared Tuna with Miso-Sesame Coleslaw
- Crepes with Sabayon and House Made Jam
- Potato Latkes with Eggs and Roasted Bacon
- Stuffed Rabbit Leg with Smashed Potatoes, Dashi-Braised Eggplant and Chimichurri

Week 5: Sautéing

Since both sautéing and pan-frying are done in a pan, people often confuse the two, but there are distinguishing features. Sautéing is a much more vigorous and involved technique than pan-frying because it uses less fat. Sautéing uses smaller cut portions cooked over a higher heat. Its name comes from the French sauté, meaning “to jump”. This refers to the idea that foods cooked this way are often tossed as they cook to prevent sticking and scorching.

Recipes:

- French Onion Soup
- Shrimp Scampi with Spiralized Vegetables
- Chicken Piccata
- Spaghetti Carbonara

Week 6: Stir-Frying

Stir-frying involves only a short cooking time, and a great deal of precision and finesse on the cook's part. Because a spoon and set of chopsticks are the only utensils permitted at a Chinese table, it is crucial that items to be stir-fried are of uniform size. If the pieces are not of similar size, cooking will be uneven and the finished results substandard. To further complicate advance preparations, there are strong customs and traditions dictating the ways in which certain ingredients must be cut and/or cooked.

Recipes:

- Stir-Fried Beef and Broccoli
- Yangzhou Fried Rice
- Fresh Salad Rolls with Mango Salsa and Dipping Sauce
- Kung Pao Chicken

Week 7: Deep-Frying

The aroma and succulence of deep-fried foods are enticing; no other cooking method can duplicate the unique taste and texture deep-frying imparts to food. This dry-heat method involves rapidly cooking food by submerging it in hot fat, most commonly oil, yielding a crunchy golden-brown surface and tender interior. The quality of deep-fried foods depends largely on the fat used and its temperature.

Recipes:

- Dill Pickle Fired Chicken with Buttermilk and House Hot Sauce
- Chicken Taquitos with Crema and Garnishes
- Potato Croquettes with Caper Emulsion
- Shrimp Toasts with Apricot Mustard Sauce

Week 8: Braising & Stewing

The primary differences between a braise and a stew are the size of the item cooked and the amount of liquid used. While braises generally involve larger cuts of meat (whole joints), stewing meat is normally cut into smaller pieces. Stews require more liquid than braises, unlike braises the items in a stew should be completely submerged by liquid. In addition, stews are normally cooked on top of the stove, uncovered, while braises are cooked in an oven in a covered vessel.

Recipes:

- Coq Au Vin
- Butter Chicken with Naan and Rice
- Paella
- Beef Cheek Poutine with Local Cheese Curds and House Frites

Week 9: Roasting

Roasting is the most primitive cooking method, having been discovered by the time of the Neanderthals, but of all cooking methods, roasting is the only one to claim its own course in classic menu structure. The roast is given pride of place in the “triad” of meats that form the core of French haute cuisine meals. Although what we consider to be roasting now mostly occurs in enclosed ovens.

Recipes:

- Leg of Lamb with Celeriac Pureé and Roasted Brussels Sprouts
- Coffee Roasted Carrots with Lentils, Labneh, Za’atar Chips and Beet Hummus
- Roasted Pork Shoulder Bo Ssam
- Curry Roasted Cauliflower Steaks with Gnocchi Parisienne and Brown Butter Croutons

Week 10: Baking

Baking is one of the oldest methods of preparing food, with evidence of early flatbreads dating back thousands of years. Of all cooking methods, baking is unique in its transformation of simple ingredients through the precise interplay of flour, fat, sugar, eggs and leavening. From ancient breads to the refined pastries of classic French cuisine, baking has played a central role in culinary traditions around the world. Although modern baking takes place primarily in enclosed ovens, its fundamental techniques remain rooted in the earliest traditions of the craft.

Recipes:

- Tourtiere with Red Pepper Condiment
- Pullman Loaf with Leek and Bread Pudding
- Spanakopita with Tzatziki
- Basque Cheesecake and Coconut Tres Leches Cake with Torched Italian Meringue

Week 11: Steaming

Steaming is one of the most nutritionally sound methods in a cook's repertoire since it is relatively fast, preserves nutrients, and requires no fat. Steaming is a method best-suited to cooking delicate items like fish, grains and vegetables. Dumplings also require steaming; baking them would result in an altogether different result, and boiling would damage them. Ingredients must be of the highest quality since steaming will only accentuate any hint of food staleness or age. Steaming is an efficient method in terms of time, energy and space.

Recipes:

- Shao Mai Dumpling
- Mussels Meunière with Grilled Bread
- Cauliflower Tostada with Smoked Trout
- Salmon Rillette on Plantain Chip

Week 12: Grilling

Grilling is often considered the "perfect" cooking method for the nutritionally minded chef. Items suited to it are generally lean and, like steaming, do not require the addition of fat. Since grilling is a fast method, meats are usually prime cuts; cooking time will not be long enough to break down connective tissue. Because the cooking period is very short, there is very little opportunity to introduce flavour; marinating can help solve this. Delicate items often benefit from basting with oil or fat to add flavour and moisture, and to prevent sticking.

Recipes:

- Grilled Quail with Barley Risotto, Spinach and Chipotle Jus
- Hanger Steak Tacos with House Made Tortilla and Tomatillo Salsa
- Grilled Sweet Potato Salad with Arugula, Walnut Vinaigrette and Garnishes
- Grilled Salmon with Couscous and Ratatouille

Week 13: Salt Curing & Ceviche

Salt curing and ceviche are preservation and preparation methods that rely on salt, acid, and time rather than heat to transform food. Salt curing draws moisture from ingredients while concentrating flavour and creating an environment that inhibits spoilage. Ceviche uses acidic marinades, traditionally citrus juice, to denature the proteins in delicate seafood, creating a texture and appearance similar to cooking. Both methods require careful attention to freshness, seasoning, timing, and temperature. Because neither method relies on heat to eliminate pathogens, proper handling and high-quality ingredients are essential.

Recipes:

- Ceviche with a Range of Chips
- Gravlax Salmon Crostini with Herbed Cream Cheese and Preserved Lemon
- Scallop Crudo with Fennel and Citrus Garnishes
- House-Cured Bacon Salad Trio; Caesar, Broccoli and Wedge

Week 14: Group Dinner