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### Top of the Chops

Pick up some serious knife skills and take home a joint expertly carved by your own hand during a Sunday butchery class at Chadwicks in Balham.

The Ginger Pig, also offers hands-on butchery classes at its Shepherd's Bush and Marylebone stores, which include a two-course meal and a glass of wine.

- Chadwicks Butchery Classes, most Sundays £129pp (or £99pp if 3 people or more) [chadwicksbutchers.com](http://chadwicksbutchers.com)
- Ginger Pig Butchery Classes, most days £155pp [thegingerpig.co.uk](http://thegingerpig.co.uk)

### Perfect pizzas

Pizza Express has been dishing out margheritas since 1965, so where better to brush up on your dough skills? Adult pizza making parties are great, messy fun - the evening starts with prosecco and the legendary dough balls (brain food, I am sure) before getting stuck into dough tossing, pizza making and pizza eating, of course. Go with a group and get stuck in! Sourdough pizza supremos, Franco Manca also run a pizza making masterclass on the second Monday of each month, at the Chiswick branch only.

- Pizza Express Adult Pizza Parties - £21.95pp (min of 8) [pizzaexpress.com/book/adults-pizza-making-party](http://pizzaexpress.com/book/adults-pizza-making-party)
- Franco Manca - £20pp; [francomanca.co.uk](http://francomanca.co.uk)



### Cocktail o'clock

One for the road? Oh go on then. At party bar, Revolution on Clapham High Street you can get behind the bar and become a master of mixology with this new 90-minute cocktail masterclass. Your very own dedicated bartender will guide you through shaking, stirring, mixing and muddling a variety of classic cocktails. Expect cocktail-inspired entertainment and some energetic drinking games. Stomach-lining nibbles included...

- £30pp (min of 8); [revolution-bars.co.uk](http://revolution-bars.co.uk)

# Now you're cooking

*It's never too late to sharpen up your kitchen skills. Sophie Farrah goes in search of the best local cookery schools to help her find her inner chef*

I love food, but can I cook? Absolutely not. And so, as I watch the youth of today return to school, I make a decision; it's time to do some culinary learning of my own.

My first stop, somewhat optimistically, is *The Michel Roux Jr Cookery School* at Cactus Kitchens in Clapham – also used as the location for BBC One's hit show, *Saturday Kitchen*. Here you can sign up for a day with the two-star Michelin chef himself who will guide you through a three-course fine dining menu.

Previous dishes have included poached scallops with leeks and smoked salmon and roast lamb rump with merguez, served with spelt risotto and deep-fried kale. The price tag is substantial, but it promises to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for any serious gastronome. Perhaps I should start smaller.?

Luckily, just down the road in Wandsworth is *The Avenue Cookery School*, run by professional chef, Diana and her family. Here, anyone can learn how to cook just about anything – from bread making to Sunday brunch, sushi to simple suppers, and all in the new swish 10-seater school kitchen. Daytime classes include breakfast and lunch; evenings include supper and bottomless booze which sounds like my kind of cooking.

With my culinary confidence increasing (perhaps it's the booze), it's time for a taste of the exotic, so I head over to *Cook Sri Lankan* in Battersea. Over the course

of four hours, passionate Sri Lankan cook, Numi teaches hapless students like me how to make four delicious traditional dishes, such as vattakka currya and bandakka baduma (that's yellow pumpkin curry and special pan-fried okra to you and me). The good news is that you get to devour whatever you cook on the day and you take home the recipes and a starter pack of spices.

No meal would be complete without something to wash it down, so time to sniff, swill and spit at *The Humble Grape* in Battersea. This cosy wine bar conveniently doubles up as an informal wine school, and regular classes cater for both 'nerds and newbies'. October's class is dubbed 'The Blind Challenge', kicking off with the classics, followed by slightly wackier wines. It's not about being able to tell the difference between a pinot and a Picpoul but about discovering new and usual wines. Also, the evening starts with a glass or two of fizz, so things can only get better from there.

I am now exhausted, full and ever so slightly merry – I don't remember school being this tough.

- The Michel Roux Jr Premier Experience, 4 & 11 October, £995pp; [cactuskitchens.co.uk](http://cactuskitchens.co.uk)
- The Avenue, various courses in October. From £55pp; [theavenuecookeryschool.com](http://theavenuecookeryschool.com)
- Numi's Cook Sri Lankan, various dates available on request. £70pp; [cooksrilankan.co.uk](http://cooksrilankan.co.uk)
- The Humble Grape, Oct 26, £50pp [humblegrape.co.uk/wine-bar-battersea](http://humblegrape.co.uk/wine-bar-battersea)



## GET A SLICE OF THE ACTION

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