

E-PICUREAN

Upskill from the comfort of your own home with the help of a virtual cookery school

Words MARK TAYLOR



SLOW LIFE GOOD LIFE

Launched in April and inspired by recent events and the uncertain times ahead, Slow Life Good Life is an online community of South West-based chefs, gardeners, experts and producers, including Gill Meller, Naomi Devlin and goat meat producer James Whetlor of Cabrito. Whether it's sitting (albeit virtually) at Gill's kitchen table while he demonstrates how to make pasta at home; learning how to choose thrifty meat cuts with River Cottage's Steven Lamb; or watching former Borough Market demo chef Luke McKay create a budget-friendly storecupboard feast, there is a vast range of skills and expert advice available for just over £5 a month. Even better is the fact that all proceeds go towards feeding families and supporting small rural businesses affected by current events. slowlifegoodlife.com

LEITHS

Since it was founded by Prue Leith back in 1975, Leiths has been a benchmark of cooking education, with famous alumni including celebrated food writer Diana Henry and *Saturday Kitchen* presenter Matt Tebbutt. With course fees for its renowned International Diploma in Food and Wine around the £20,000 mark, Leiths might not be in the budget of most home cooks but its online courses are far more affordable. The 24-week Essential Cooking Certificate costs £1,495. The course involves three hours per week of cooking as you follow step-by-step videos and upload photos of your work for feedback from your Leiths teacher. There's also a six-week course for teens, costing £195, teaching knife skills, kitchen hygiene and family friendly dishes. For those who want to try out before committing, there's a taster workshop available to download for just £9.99. leiths.com



DELIA ONLINE

"My ambition and dream is that anyone who wants to learn to cook can." So says British cookery doyenne Delia Smith, who launched her online school in 2013. Access to recipes and videos is free, and step-by-step instructions are clear and precise, as is the trademark Delia style. The course is split into five 'terms' – bakes, eggs, pastry, bread, rice and pasta – as well as techniques and basics. Whether it's the perfect coffee and walnut sponge cake, lasagne al forno or how to make a vinaigrette dressing, the recipes are aimed at home cooks of all levels. deliaonline.com



MASSIMO BOTTURA

Italian chef Massimo Bottura's daily #kitchenquarantine cookery demos and Q&A sessions on Instagram proved particularly popular during the global lockdown. The English-speaking 7pm livestreams from the kitchen of his family home regularly attracted more than 200,000 views for recipes such as tiramisu, ragu and even a decidedly non-Italian veggie-packed Thai curry. The chef-patron of three-Michelin-starred Osteria Francescana restaurant in Modena, has a series of Modern Italian sessions on MasterClass, which also features courses from renowned chefs Thomas Keller and Alice Waters, and pastry chef Dominique Ansel. Pay £85 for 12 lessons (including a downloadable class cookbook), or you can buy two site passes for £170, which gives you access to all chefs, and learn anything from simple pesto and pasta making, to risotto and zero-waste broth making good use of leftovers such as potato peelings and onion skins. [@massimobotturo; masterclass.com](https://www.masterclass.com)



ILLUSTRATION: AILSA CHAPMAN

MARTHA DE LACEY

Journalist turned private caterer, baker and chef Martha de Lacey has built up a loyal following for her east London supperclubs, and sourdough and fermentation workshops, but since Covid-19 she has gained an even wider audience for her online classes. Martha's #TheMuffKitchen Instagram subscription e-course is updated daily with recipes, videos and tutorials. Martha shares her recipes for sourdough, as well as as well as starter crackers, 'trash' crumpets and waffles. To sign up, purchase a one-off joining fee (£60) via her website and then choose a subscription option – £5 or £10 a month, depending on how much you can afford. marthadelacey.com

LEARNING WITH EXPERTS

Learning with Experts features a number of high-quality courses covering a wide range of subjects but when it comes to food there's the likes of Paul A Young teaching the art of chocolate making, and foraging with Miles Irving. Look out for *BBC Good Food's* Cassie Best's essential skills for home cooks course (£109) to nail basic knife skills, cooking and preparing fish and seafood, making curries and dahls, and baking. Trained at Leiths School of Food and Wine, and now a senior food editor, Cassie brings years of experience to the course and participants have access to personal feedback, group chat with fellow classmates, and receive a certificate at the end of it. learningwithexperts.com



LONDON ART COLLEGE

If drawing food appeals as much as cooking it, try one of the London Art College's online diploma courses. The Botanical Coloured Pencil Art Course teaches you about the anatomy of plants as well as looking at tonal drawing and pen and ink skills when drawing plants, flowers and fruits. The course (£306) is a written one which students work through, and assignments are uploaded or posted to the college and the tutor provides feedback and advice. londonartcollege.co.uk



LORNA WING

The lockdown may have curtailed school and college terms for students heading off to uni in the autumn but that doesn't mean they can't learn vital cookery skills at home over the summer. Food consultant and caterer Lorna Wing's online courses are principally aimed at tech-savvy teenagers and students, who send photos of their creations and then get personalised feedback from Lorna via WhatsApp. The courses also encourage students to cook with their friends by signing up for the courses together and using FaceTime, Zoom or Houseparty to make their learning more interactive. Duke of Edinburgh's Award students can also use Lorna's DoFE-approved Introductory and Intermediate Courses to gain their Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards. The cost for one student is £150 or £125 each for two students booking together. For every teen who signs up during the coronavirus crisis, Lorna will make donations to charities Mind, Wandsworth Foodbank and The Silver Line. lornawingcookery.co.uk