

# What's cooking in paradise?

SHAPE sniffs out the best cooking schools in the most alluring settings around the world

If you love to eat, you find cooking incredibly relaxing, you're constantly on the lookout for wholesome recipes and new techniques, and you're passionate about travel and immersing yourself into new cultures then signing up for a cooking school in an exotic location could be the perfect recipe for you.



Culinary central

## FRANCE TWO BORDELAIS, BORDEAUX

▶ At Two Bordelais, the dream team of the Bordelais' themselves, Denise and Jean-Pierre Moullé, will help transform you into a formidable French chef. In a beautifully restored 17th-century barn on a sun dappled vineyard near St Emilion, you'll fully

immerse yourself into the Bordeaux way of life.

Jean-Pierre has been a chef at Chez Panisse for more than 25 years, while his wife Denise has an exhaustive knowledge of wine, garnered at one of her family's seven world-renowned châteaux. The couple will take you to the vineyards and local markets and introduce you to the artisans so passionate about the art of cheese making, chocolate baking, charcuterie, barrel making and growing organic vegetables. They'll even secure you invitations to dine in local homes. Of course there's plenty of cooking in between, with lessons in the delightful farm house kitchen with its mature stone walls and blazing fireplaces.

**STAY** At La Forge, a 200-year-old stone house in Entre-deux-Mers.  
**BOOK** Air France flies to Bordeaux from Dhs3,276. See [twobordelais.com/bordeaux](http://twobordelais.com/bordeaux). The course is Dhs13,200, including accommodation and meals.

## THAILAND PHUKET

▶ If a takeaway doesn't cut it for you, learn how to create your own mouthwatering Thai dish at the Trisara resort in Phuket. With spices that tingle every tastebud, and bowls of healthy ingredients, this is the perfect food for anyone who wants to enjoy what they're eating while watching their waistline. But for those who are intimidated by these intricate looking dishes, don't panic. The chefs of the Trisara kitchen will soon have you creating a host of masterpieces that will wow any dinner party. And as you chop, slice and stir your creations, the chefs are on hand to give you tips along the way. It's worth putting in the effort as you'll get to devour them later.

**STAY** At one of the private villas set in 40 acres of tropical countryside.  
**BOOK** Emirates flies to Bangkok from Dhs2,555. Then take an internal flight to Phuket. Dnata.com is offering three nights for the price of four. Pay Dhs3,965 each for two people sharing. Cooking classes held every week.

The ultimate fast food



Burn off some calories with laps in Trisara's glamorous pool or join a snorkelling trip to one of the islands



## AMERICA SANTÉ FE, NEW MEXICO

Imagine holidaying in breathtaking surroundings instilled with endless energy and well-fed with delicious, guilt-free meals. The Conscious Gourmet Culinary Retreat will change your life. A summer cooking refuge located at the foot of the majestic Sangre de Cristo Mountains, it features a bounty of health-supportive seasonal recipes and techniques coupled with the freshest organic ingredients from the local Farmer's and Whole Foods markets.

Ease into the day with a yoga class, before revving things up in the kitchen where instructor-founder Diane Carlson, a former director and co president of New York's Natural gourmet Institute, will educate you about almond milk for dairy-free desserts and about the benefits of expeller-pressed oils. Most recipes are vegetarian but don't let that put off the carnivores as the meals are genuinely tasty. Importantly, Diane teaches you how to fully appreciate food. The course also includes an excursion to ancient Pueblo sites and dinner at the legendary Cafe Pascal.

**STAY** Sunrise Springs Resort Spa ([sunrisesprings.com](http://sunrisesprings.com)), where the retreat takes place has a serene setting complete with a hot tub. Rooms start at Dhs460.

**BOOK** American Airlines flies to Santa Fe Municipal Airport, from Dhs4,551.

The course costs Dhs5,675 for four days. Visit the [consciousgourmet.com](http://consciousgourmet.com).



Dine out in style



## MORROCCO MARRAKECH

Immerse yourself into a world of exquisite luxury, bucolic beauty, heady hospitality and a symphony of tastes with Peggy Markel's adventures.

Based in mystical Marrakech, you'll visit the nearby Jardine Bio-aromatique de l'Ourika to study the properties of essential oils, the nigella seed, the health benefits of argan oil and how to make Berber bread and find yourself under the skilled tutelage of Baija Tarik, who'll share her revered recipes. The tagine is a central focus, as is couscous, pastille and a study of spices. Afternoons are for soaking in the hammam and roving through the medina. Not to be missed is hiking in the High Atlas Mountains and sampling freshly grilled fish in the dazzling coastal city of Essaouira.

**STAY** Designer Meryanne Loum Martin and ethno botanist Gary Martin have created Jnane Tamsna, a compound of three delightful houses set in Palmeraie, a date palm oasis outside of Marrakech.

**BOOK** Etihad has flights to Marrakech starting at Dhs6,925. For details on the school visit [peggymarkel.com](http://peggymarkel.com). Prices start at Dhs16,800 per person for nine days including accommodation, three meals per day, cooking instruction, tours, tasting and local transportation.

## ITALY LAZIO, ITALY

Two hours north of Rome you'll be transported to a bygone era at Villa Oria, a 16th-century house overlooking the Tiber Valley surrounded by medieval abbeys. The classes take place on an award-winning olive farm which has to be the ultimate setting to inspire gourmet greatness.

Then there's masterful Chef Gianfranco Callidona, who passes on his wealth of knowledge about food, olive oil and wine as he effortlessly illustrates how to throw a hearty Italian meal together.

Classes run from 10am to 1pm and are followed by lunch. Essential Italian techniques you'll master include homemade ravioli, gnocchi, pasta sauces, risotto, bruschetta and pizza – the latter baked in the old oven using natural wood. And for healthy eaters, vegetable and grain soups, grilled, roasted, fried and stuffed vegetables are also on the menu.

**STAY** One of their splendid suites in or around the Villa Oria country house.

**BOOK** Etihad has flights to Rome starting at Dhs3,695. For details visit [villaoiria.it](http://villaoiria.it). Priced Dhs400-500 per night for the room, plus Dhs500 per cooking class.

