

What: [exhibitions](#), [free](#), [rock](#), [cocktails](#)

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 Today  
Tomorrow  
This Weekend

**100 minutes**
**Tom Jeffreys**
**Do Something Different - London Cookery Classes**  
29 July, 2011

**Bar Pepito, King's Cross**  
28 July, 2011

**Tamarind, Mayfair**  
28 July, 2011

**101 Pimlico Road, Sloane Square**  
28 July, 2011

**JW Steakhouse, Park Lane**  
28 July, 2011

**The Swan at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, South Bank**  
28 July, 2011

## Do Something Different - London Cookery Classes

 0 29 July, 2011  
by: [Tom Jeffreys](#)

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Tom Jeffreys samples some of the best cookery classes that London has to offer.



However long you've lived in London, there's always something new to discover – even in the most obvious, tourist-ridden hotspots that grizzled veteran Londoners avoid like the plague. It's very rare these days that I find myself in places like Leicester Square or Covent Garden and I haven't been in Chinatown for years. Until now that is, and it really is full of surprises – like another little world, crammed with strange delights.

I'm being shown around by chef Jeremy Pang from the (brilliantly named) [School of Wok](#) as part of a taster session for a series of cookery classes taking place this August. The classes, operating under the name [Cookery Coach](#), are themed around the cuisine of three different nationalities – Indian (which explores all the different spices) British (with a focus on season and locality) and, the one I'm exploring, Chinese – in order to provide relaxed but in-depth introductions into some of the UK's favourite foods.



We kick off by picking up some soft, sweet honey buns at Kowloon on Gerrard Street (which Jeremy's grandfather used to own), before popping into a couple of Chinese supermarkets to pick up a selection of weird and wonderful produce. Jeremy explains about the differences between light and dark soy sauces, the different textures of tofu, various types of noodles (and why the instructions on the packets are always wrong!) and introduces me to range of peculiar fruits and vegetables, like mangosteen: a funny little purple globe, whose white, fibrous fruit tastes like lychee once you break open the casing with your thumbs. I always suspected that such delights might be hidden away in Chinatown – it takes a tour with Jeremy to begin to discover them.



From here it's back to the cooking school at [Divertimenti](#) on Marylebone High Street to get started with these exciting ingredients. I learn how to make brilliantly fresh-tasting crispy wontons, flash fried morning glory with garlic and chilli, and some stir-fried noodles with Chinese celery. This is just a taster though and visitors on the full course will get to do far more. The results though are simply delicious, and to be honest I'm amazed that I actually managed to make these things. Throughout, Jeremy is a brilliant teacher – passionate and knowledgeable, but also clear and keen to stress that it's the visitors that do the prep and the cooking, not him.

Launching this August, these day-long Cookery Coach events couldn't have come at a better time, as London is currently experiencing a real boom in the popularity of cookery classes. Of course, there's always the big names like [Leith's](#) and [Caldesi](#), but there's also smaller places like [Food Secret](#), which opened in 2009 to offer a nutritionally-balanced approach, and [Chowpatty SupperClub](#), an Indian-focused set-up launched in 2010. September 2011 even sees beloved London butchers [The Ginger Pig](#) launching a series of meat-preparation classes called, rather intimidatingly, Meat Kitchen.



One of the best of the bunch though is [L'Atelier des Chefs](#) on Wigmore Street (I wonder why so many of these schools are clustered round Marylebone?) partly on account of the sheer range of different classes and course on offer: from kid's cooking and macaroon specials to four-hour specialist masterclasses. To get a feel for things I attend one of their Cook, Eat and Run classes, which promise to entertain you, teach you new skills and make a tasty meal, all inside your hour-long lunch break.

And it certainly delivers. Whilst the experience isn't quite as exciting as an insider's tour round Chinatown, it is fun and friendly and I pick up a couple of interesting tips for boiling rice and de-seeding chillies. Our group makes a chicken and mango curry, which is pretty darned good, and as promised it only takes half an hour – this would make a great activity for a group of kids on school holiday or a bit of fun for the stressed out workers who fill the nearby offices. And at only £15 it's probably cheaper (not to mention better and way more fun) than half the restaurants in the area.

And this is the great thing about London. Even in your lunch hour there's something new and exciting out there, waiting to be discovered.

**Cookery Coach** (feat. School of Wok) @ Divertimenti  
5th-7th, 12th-14th, 19th-21st August, 10am – 4pm, £180

**Cook, Eat and Run** @ L'Atelier des Chefs  
Dates and times vary, £15

**Meat Kitchen** @ The Ginger Pig  
from September 2011, £148

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Take a look at our class schedule on [www.atelierdeschefs.co.uk](http://www.atelierdeschefs.co.uk)



### Latest From the Critics

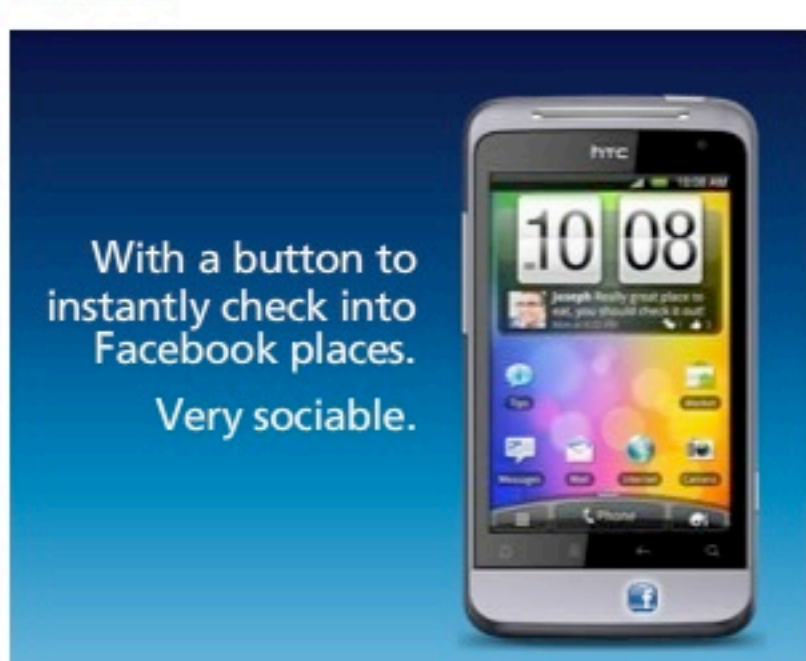
**Review: Tim and Eric - Awesome Show, Great Job!**  
Before the show begins, a man sat behind me takes his friend through various Tim and Eric sketches. Clear...

**Do Something Different - London Cookery Classes**  
Always a fun way to spend a day in London, but this time it's a bit more...

**Bar Pepito, King's Cross**  
As far as I'm aware, it was the usually tedious Barney Ronay, a sports writer for the Guar...

**Tamarind, Mayfair**  
The usual formula for restaurant reviews these days is predictably tripartite: 1, the critic bang...

**101 Pimlico Road, Sloane Square**  
Ah the four-hour lunch break. It makes me feel rather like a banker, or one of those plutocratic fel...



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