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Cook, Eat and Run at L'atelier des Chefs



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L'atelier des Chefs is a little cookery school right in the heart of London. The school started in France in 2004, and now has several branches in France, Dubai, and of course, London. L'atelier des Chefs, which translates to "chef's workshop", specialise in giving visitors a 'cook and dine experience'. It is not the sort of school where you enrol in a month long course. It's a place where you can go for anything from 30 minutes to 4 hours, for a fun but intensive class. It's also where, after your class, you can enjoy the fruits of your labours with your fellow cookery enthusiasts over a glass of wine.

L'atelier run various types of courses:

Hour-long "Everyday Easy" classes where you can learn to make 2 dishes that are easy to recreate at home. (£36)

"Cook & Dine" classes, where you'll learn a 3-course menu in an hour and a half. (£54)

"All About..." classes, where, over 2 hours, you will become an expert on whatever that particular class is all about, which could be anything from knife skills to macaroons. (£72)

There are also monthly "Grand Cuisine Masterclasses", which deal with getting the most out of seasonal ingredients and teach original and unique recipes. (£144)

When iLoveMyGrub went along, it was to try out a fifth style of cookery lesson called "Cook, Eat & Run". Cook, Eat and Run is such a great idea: a 30-minute course designed especially to coincide with lunch hour. As the working day goes, the lunch hour is second only to home time on the list of things to look forward to. And what could be more fun than using this hour to learn something new, meet some new people, and enjoy a delicious, freshly cooked, seasonal meal? It wasn't all local lunch-breakers though. There were a couple who were in London on holiday, and a pair of ladies who had decided to come along as part of their day of a shopping day on Oxford Street.

When everyone had arrived, the chef beckoned us over to the hobs at the front, and picked 2 people to come and seal the steaks. He explained, as his chosen sous-chefs worked away, that the meat releases sugars as it cooks making it stick to the pan, but that it is important not to try and un-stick the meat before it's ready as this damages it. When the steaks were sealed, they were placed in a pre-prepared Asian-style bouillon, where they simmered away while we turned our attention to the vegetables.

"It's called stir fry for a reason!" the chef told us, "don't stop stirring!" But before we could begin with the stirring and frying, we embarked on a group chopping extravaganza: 7 minutes to chop mountains of carrots, radishes, mange-touts, mushrooms and chillies. Two more sous-chefs were chosen to go to the front and do the stir-frying, while the rest of us helped out by adding various sauces and seasonings.

Lead and behold, half an hour had passed, and before us we had produced a perfectly delicious lunch, which we all

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in-house chefs, which you can purchase very inexpensively on top of your meal.

One of the other lunch-hour participants I chatted to, said she would have liked to have cooked her own steak herself, rather than have one person do the steak, one do the stir fry, and everyone share the chopping and seasoning. Indeed, this is what I had been expecting from the session. Realistically, I suppose, there is a limit to what can be done in half an hour. This class is more of an interactive lunch. Don't go for Cook, Eat and Run if you want to become a great chef; go if you want a bit of fun in the middle of the day, and you want to chat to a few interesting new people. All of us who attended the class that day enjoyed it, and picked up a few tips, and all of us said we'd come back again as it really is a fun and unique thing to do in London. For a more serious cooking lesson, one of L'atelier's other classes might be a better choice.

A different dish is taught every day with Cook, Eat and Run, keeping the dishes seasonal, so you can go back time and time again and always learn something new. The classes are a bargain at £15, and would make a great alternative office bonding trip. What better way to get to know your co-workers than to see them rolling up their sleeves, donning a pinny, and wielding a wooden spoon?

Written by: Emily Boyd

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