

The Observer Food Monthly

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OFM

Top ten cookery schools in Europe

We went, we saw, we were conquered... OFM's team of amateur chefs polish their skills on the continent

...gathered
the greengrocer, baker and butcher where
he buys his fresh produce. He taught us
how to make stifádho (beef stew with
tomatoes and onions), spanokópitta
(spinach and cheese pie) and baklava (a
layered filo pie with honey and nuts) as
well as the other, more experimental
dishes he's become known for - feta
mousse, squid in basil sauce and
courgette parcels stuffed with
mushrooms. 'I think that cooking is a bit
of fantasy - a way of expressing yourself,'
said Stavros as he filled everyone's
glasses up again. POLLY ROGER BROWN

Casa Ombuto Tuscany, Italy

Tel: 0039 34873 63864

www.italiancookerycourse.com

High in the hills of the Casentino valley,
50km south of Florence is Casa Ombuto -
an amazing house with a swimming pool
and views to die for. Michele, interpreter
and frontman, and his wife Carla, one of
the most respected chefs in Tuscany run
the inspiring seven-day cookery course,
held in the cave-like cantina of the villa.

I tried everything from basic pasta-
making to a delicious wild boar in tomato
and herb dish. I had a day's excursion
which ended in the most stunning
restaurant for dinner, and a day free to
view the surrounding wildlife or visit
Florence. The other five days are for
cooking, which starts at 3pm. This course
suits those who are keen to learn with
little experience to those established
cooks looking to broaden their tastes and
techniques. WENDY GEOGHEGAN

Promenades Gourmandes with Paule Caillat Paris, France

available through Gourmet on Tour
Tel: 020 7396 5550

This is a non-residential cookery course
designed to be slotted into a weekend, or
long visit to Paris. You could just about
do it on Eurostar for the day. It's a terrific
way of discovering the food underbelly of
the city, as the Cordon Bleu chef and
guide, Paule Caillat, leads the class round
markets, butchers, the kitchens at the
Hotel de Crillo, truffle and herb shops.
You then return to Caillat's kitchen
in the Marais and cook...

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