

Overview



Cooking School in Tuscany

Located in a beautiful countryside villa the Chianti area of Tuscany, our cooking school welcomes everyone who loves to cook and wants to learn how to prepare genuine Italian dishes. Suitable for both beginners and experienced cooks, our courses range from classical and seasonal recipes to Afrodisiac cooking and customized courses that satisfy any culinary interest. Our hands-on courses are often complemented by visits of excellent Chianti winemakers, organic farms and produce markets. The school is lead by Chef Seamus who teaches the cooking courses and Patrizia Barbieri who manages Tuscan Tours and hospitality.



Chef Seamus de Pentheny O'Kelly

Born in South Africa to an noble Irish family, Chef Seamus Seamus de Pentheny O'Kelly has had a prestigious career of an international chef. Before settling in Italy, he worked with chocolatier Bernachon and restaurateur Paul Bocuse, and in the 1990s became the Master Chef of the Discovery Channel. Each of his cooking lessons is dedicated to a complete menu that can be easily repeated at home. The menus are both simple and delicious, and the lessons are enriched with useful kitchen tips. Seamus' great sense of humor, contagious passion for cooking and a gift for storytelling make him a truly engaging teacher.



Tuscan Tours and Holidays

Chianti Kitchen also offers unforgettable Tuscan experiences for anyone who is planning a weekend or a holiday in Italy. Our detailed knowledge of Tuscany and especially of Chianti, combined with our enduring friendships with wine producers, organic farms and countryside villas, give us unique resources to create tailor-made Tuscan Tours. We create complete holiday packages for all budgets, for first time visitors and Tuscan aficionados, for newlyweds and groups of gourmets. We also offer one-day tours that can include a cooking lesson, a visit of excellent wine estates, a truffle hunting adventure, visits of organic farms, or a rental of a picturesque villa.

Cooking School



Cooking Classes in our Tuscan Villa

In our courses you learn how to create a complete Italian menu in less time and with results that impress the eye and the palate. The recipes are simple, and rely on well chosen ingredients and timing, and range from appetizers and pasta to main courses and desserts. Our hands-on courses are suitable for everyone who loves to cook and eat, from beginners to seasoned cooks. Our courses aim to stimulate your culinary creativity and teach you how to better organize your cooking to spend more time with your family and friends, and less behind the stove. Most of our one day courses last about 4 hours, and can include up to 20 participants.



Great Classics, Regional & Seasonal Courses

Great classics include courses that we have been the favorites among our course participants and friends. Tasting Menu is composed of great Italian classics and Menu a Sorpresa is inspired by the best ingredients on the produce market.

Regional menus contain the best from our favorite Italian regions. The top place belongs, of course, to Menu Toscano. If you like spicy southern flavors, you will enjoy the Calabria Menu. Another favorite is the Roman Holiday.

Seasonal courses focus on fresh ingredients that reach their perfection in a specific part of the year. We also offer holiday menus: Easter, New Year's Eve, Halloween and many others.



Customized Courses

Customized courses are tailor-made in format and contents. We offer courses for Families with Children composed of easy and delicious recipes, and Cooking for Newlyweds - a "kitchen initiation" course for those who have passed their single life living on take-out, and would like to warm up their new, shared home with some good cooking.

In terms of contents, if you are interested in cooking with truffles, we can offer you a specialized course paired with a truffle hunting excursion. If seafood is your passion, we offer a course that employs fish & seafood in every dish, and a farmers' market visit to select your ingredients.

Chief Seamus



Biography of Seamus de Pentheny O'Kelly

Descendant of a noble Irish family, Seamus de Pentheny O'Kelly was born in South Africa. After completing his studies, Seamus interns in the Ritz Hotel in Paris, manages hotels and restaurants in South Africa and Britain, and moves to France where he works with the famous patissier-chocolatier Bernachon and with restaurateur Paul Bocuse. In 1985 Seamus moves to Tuscany where he purchases and restores the Castello di Spaltenna in Gaiole. In the 1990s Seamus becomes a Master Chef of the Discovery Channel and leads the Osteria del Castello. In 2006-7 Seamus finally turns into reality his dream project: a cooking school in Chianti - The Chianti Kitchen.



Afrodisiac Cooking

Thanks to his extensive experiences with many culinary traditions, including Italian, French, Portuguese, East Asian and African, Seamus has come to appreciate the marvelous aphrodisiac effects of food and cooking. He has become one of the most well known advocates of what he calls the Afrodisiac Cooking, a name that pays homage to his African roots. In fact the homonymous course has been one of the favorites at our cooking school. This course demonstrates that not only specific foods, ingredients and spices have an aphrodisiac power, but that also the esthetic aspect of a dish and the act of cooking itself create this special effect.



Seamus' Fund and Music

Seamus Fund supports the medical and care giving services for HIV-infected children in Swaziland, at the Baylor Clinic. The clinic offers counseling, group therapy and meals to children living with HIV.

Afrodisiaco CD blends African rhythms with Seamus's Irish roots and the southern Italian musical heritage of Mimmo Epifani, the co-author of the album. The CD is easy to listen to, has sensual rhythms and gives you an unexpected energy. The band is called Zucchini Flowers. All profits generated by the sales of this CD go fully and directly to the Seamus Fund.

Tuscan Tours



Holiday Packages

Patrizia, a food, wine and travel specialist, manages the Tuscan Tours offered by Chianti Kitchen. For first time visitors and long-time Tuscany experts, for honeymooners and groups of friends we carefully prepare marvelous holidays. The package is tailor-made to the travelers' interests and budgets, and it can include: rental of a gorgeous countryside villa, private transportation, estate visits of both world-famous and boutique winemakers, hot-air balloon trips, organic farms visits, exclusive dining experiences, concerts reservations, hands-on participation in Sangiovese harvest, Ferrari rentals and private chamber orchestra concerts.



Wine Estate Tours

Food and wine are inseparable companions, and we often bring our cooking course participants to the finest wine estates in Tuscany – world-famous labels & undiscovered treasures. An estate tour begins with a visit of the vineyard where the winemaker explains the process of “vendemmia” - the harvest. Then we go to the cellar to discover aging techniques and barrel selections. Finally, the wine tasting. With connoisseurs we proceed to vertical tastings of riservas while for the novices we offer a tasting lesson followed by a comparative analysis. Majority of the producers we visit focus on Chianti Classico, but many of them offer also Supertuscans and much more.



Organic Farms Visits and Truffle Hunting

The countryside surrounding our cooking school is dotted with organic farms - something you won't find in the more touristy parts of Chianti. For our cooking course participants we offer a range of unique experiences that focus on the origins of the finest Italian ingredients. The tours include visits of extra virgin olive oil producers, the only cashmere goat farm in Tuscany, producers of exquisite sheep and goat cheese and much more. An all-time favorite is our truffle hunting adventure where you follow a seasoned truffle hunter in the search for these prized tubers. And of course there is the organic herb garden and orchard that surround our Chianti Kitchen villa.