



STRATFORD  
CHEFS  
SCHOOL

Where the  
Best Chefs  
Train SINCE 1983

## SCS Cooking Fundamentals | 10 Class Series

### Week 1: Boiling

The series begins with boiling; a safe and simple method of cooking with a self-regulating temperature. Liquid is boiling when it is rolling vigorously, and bubbles break frequently on its surface. Water, the most widely used liquid for this method of cooking, boils at 100°C (212°F). In practice, there are slow, medium and fast boils. It is necessary to adjust the level of the boil to suit the food being cooked — if boiled too hard the ingredients may deteriorate; if boiled too low, foodstuffs may stick to the pot. From pasta to risotto, stock to soup, learn 8 recipes dedicated to the method of boiling.

#### Recipes:

- Basic Pasta Dough
- Fettuccini Alfredo
- Fish Stock
- Shrimp Bisque
- Chicken Stock
- Chicken Consommé
- Mushroom Stock
- Mushroom Risotto

### Week 2: Poaching

Whereas boiling involves immersing foods in an active, sputtering liquid, poaching requires a gentler approach. The temperature of the cooking liquid is much lower: it does not bubble but trembles and shivers delicately; a welcome bath for fragile foods. This refined method is more challenging to master than boiling as it requires more attention to the regulation of temperature and movement.

#### Recipes:

- Duck Confit (potatoes cooked in duck fat)
- Poached Eggs – Oeufs Caroline
- Court Bouillon – Poached Trout with Brown Butter Sauce
- Chinese White Chop Chicken
- Clarified Butter – emulsified hot sauces (Maltaise/Hollandaise sauces)

### Week 3: Pan Frying

Pan frying is a dry-heat method of cooking that relies on oil or fat as the heat transfer medium, and on correct temperature and time to not overcook or burn the food. Pan-frying differs from sautéing in several important ways. Pan frying takes place at lower heat and longer cooking time. Although both involve

cooking portion-size items of food over relatively high heat, pan-frying requires more fat because the food is not moved very much. The results should be an attractive crisp textured food with a moist interior.

**Recipes:**

- Pork Piccata with Brussels Sprouts
- Potato Latkes
- Basic Omelette
- Arctic Char Meuniere with Vegetable Confetti

**Week 4: Sautéing**

Since both sautéing and pan-frying are done in a pan, people often confuse the two, but there are distinguishing features. Sautéing is a much more vigorous and involved technique than pan-frying because it uses less fat. Sautéing uses smaller cut portions cooked over a higher heat. Its name comes from the French sauté, meaning "to jump." This refers to the idea that foods cooked this way are often tossed as they cook to prevent sticking and scorching.

**Recipes:**

- Caramelized Onions
- Poulet Saute Chasseur
- Poulet Sate a la Brettone
- Asparagus with Oyster Mushroom Ragout

**Week 5: Stir-Frying**

Since stir-frying involves only a short cooking time, and a great deal of precision and finesse on the cook's part. Because a spoon and set of chopsticks are the only utensils permitted at a Chinese table, it is crucial that items to be stir-fried are of uniform size. If the pieces are not of similar size, cooking will be uneven and the finished results substandard. To further complicate advance preparations, there are strong customs and traditions dictating the ways in which certain ingredients must be cut and/or cooked.

**Recipes:**

- Chinese Boiled Rice
- Stir-fried Shrimp with Corn and Straw Mushrooms
- Stir Fried Beef Slices
- Yangzhou Fried Rice
- Singapore Noodles

**Week 6: Deep-Frying**

The aroma and succulence of deep-fried foods are enticing; no other cooking method can duplicate the unique taste and texture deep-frying imparts to food. This dry-heat method involves rapidly cooking food by submerging it in hot fat, most commonly oil, yielding a crunchy golden-brown surface and tender interior. The quality of deep-fried foods depends largely on the fat used and its temperature.

**Recipes:**

- Fish and Chips
- Spring Rolls
- Potato Samosas with Coriander Chutney
- Potato Croquettes with Caper Emulsion

## **Week 7: Braising and Stewing**

The primary differences between a braise and a stew are the size of the item stewed and the amount of liquid used. While braises generally involve larger cuts of meat (whole joints), stewing meat is normally cut into smaller pieces. Stews require more liquid than braises, unlike braises the items in a stew should be completely submerged by liquid. In addition, stews are normally cooked on top of the stove, uncovered, while braises are cooked in a covered container.

### **Recipes:**

- Sous Vide - theory
- Lamb Shanks with Creamy Beans and Turnip Purée
- Beef Short Ribs with Cauliflower Purée and Picked Mushrooms
- Navarin Printanier
- Blanquette de Veau

## **Week 8: Roasting and Baking**

Roasting is the most primitive cooking method, having been discovered by the time of the Neanderthals, but of all cooking methods, roasting is the only one to claim its own course in classic menu structure. The roast is given pride of place in the "triad" of meats that form the core of French haute cuisine meals. Although what we consider to be roasting now mostly occurs in enclosed ovens, roasting is distinct from baking because a certain degree of frying, due to rendered fat, occurs during roasting. This frying effect does not occur in baking. Additionally, in baking, a cooking vessel is invariably used. It can be edible (pastry crust), or inedible (pan, foil, or mould).

### **Recipes:**

- Roast Lamb with Celeriac Purée and Pot Roasted Root Vegetables
- Roast Monkfish with Savoy Cabbage and Bacon Butter Sauce
- Coulubiach of Salmon
- Black Bass en Papillote

## **Week 9: Steaming**

Steaming is one of the most nutritionally sound methods in a cook's repertoire since it is relatively fast, preserving nutrients, and requires no fat. Steaming is a method best-suited to cooking delicate items like fish, grains and vegetables. Dumplings also require steaming; baking them would result in an altogether different result, and boiling would damage them. Ingredients must be of the highest quality, since steaming will only accentuate any hint of staleness or age. Steaming is an efficient method in terms of time, energy and space.

### **Recipes:**

- Shao Mai
- Stuffed Lotus Leaves
- Cauliflower Tostadas
- Steamed Mussels

## **Week 10: Grilling**

Grilling is often considered the "perfect" cooking method for the nutritionally minded chef. Items suited to it are generally lean and, like steaming, do not require the addition of fat. Since grilling is a fast method, meats

are usually prime cuts; cooking time will not be long enough to break down connective tissue. Because the cooking period is very short, there is very little opportunity to introduce flavour; marinating can help solve this. Delicate items often benefit from basting with oil or fat to add flavour and moisture, and to prevent sticking.

**Recipes:**

- Carne Asada a la Mexicana
- Grilled Burger with Fixings
- Grilled Salmon with Quick Cous Cous and Cucumber Salad
- Grilled Sweet Potato Salad with Goat Gouda