

The Miami Herald

Posted on Thu, Dec. 01, 2011

Gifts with class: Lessons from South Florida masters truly keep on giving

By Ellen Kanner
Special to The Miami Herald



Jumanji tours

A wise proverb says, "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime."

A wisecrack says, "Teach a man how to fish and he just sits in a boat and drinks beer all day."

That's a bad thing?

With both adages in mind, we present holiday gifts that keep giving — South Florida classes that teach fun stuff.

Cooking

Cook, drink and be merry with South

Florida's premier chefs and sommeliers at Miami Dade College's new facility, Miami Culinary Institute. Culinarium, MCI's series of enthusiast outreach classes, feeds every gastronomic desire, from pairing dinner and wine with Michael's Genuine's chef Michael Schwartz to a virtual wine tour in which you taste your way through wine regions and study sustainability. Two-hour classes start at \$40. Gift cards available, too.

- Miami Culinary Institute, MDC Wolfson Campus, 415 NE Second Ave., Miami; 305-237-3276, www.miamidadeculinary.com (click culinarium).

Don't know pappadum from paneer? Experience the exotic world of Indian cuisine in Ayesha's Kitchen — or your own. Instructor Ayesha D'Mello teaches hands-on classes in Indian cooking, minimum nine students per class. Not only will students make — and enjoy eating — tandooris, curries and breads, but D'Mello teaches the healing Ayurvedic properties of Indian spices. A half-day class is \$75 per person and includes copies of recipes prepared in class. Discounts available if you sign up for more than one class.

- Ayesha's Kitchen, 9105 SW 115th Ter., Miami; 305-254-0693, www.ayeshaskitchen.com.

Become a wok star by taking stir-fry classes with Eleanor Hoh. Two-hour classes take place each month at Coverings, Etc, 7610 NE Fourth Ct., Miami; \$45. Or schedule private classes for a maximum of 10 students at the venue of your choice.

- Eleanor Hoh, 305-318-5749, www.eleanorhoh.com.

Gardening

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden's Lifelong Learning program offers a bumper crop of classes. You can learn how to grow vegetables and raise (not kill) orchids, but classes also include designing jewelry from "found" objects and taking stellar photos with your iPhone. There's everything from painting to Pilates. Class prices and schedules vary, starting with a two-hour horticulture class for \$25.

- Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, 10709 Old Cutler Rd., Coral Gables; 305-667-1651, ext. 3322; www.fairchildgarden.org (click education).

Fishing

From fishing the flats to deep sea adventures, from Fort Lauderdale to the Florida Keys, Fish Jumanji is a great source for aspiring anglers. An armada of vessels is available for full- and half-day charters. Fish Jumanji's experienced crew specializes in enthusiastic beginners. Pricing varies based on the size of the charter boat and the number of passengers (maximum 40); \$115-\$150 per person for four hours. Cost includes boat, guide, crew, tackle, gear, ice, fuel and fishing license. Boats leave from Bayside.

- Fish Jumanji, 401 Biscayne Blvd., Miami; 786-486-7200, www.fishjumanji.com.

Paddle boarding

Stand-up paddleboarding combines the fun of surfing with the control of paddling, plus it gives you a serious workout. Miami Beach Water Adventures can teach you the basics in a single class. It provides instruction, tour and gear. Classes run \$35 per hour, but they're offering Herald readers a holiday special — \$35 for two hours. Group maximum is five people. Individual instruction is available for \$60 per person.

- Miami Beach Water Adventures, 234 Washington Ave., Miami Beach; 786-290-7579, www.miamibeachwateradventures.com.

Swimming

Water fun isn't just for grown-ups. Ocaquatics Swim School, in business since 1994, offers swimming instruction to South Florida water babies from 6 months to school-age in play-filled half-hour classes for three to six students. Tuition is \$68 per month, including four classes, plus an annual registration fee of \$15 per child or \$25 per family. Private lessons also available. Ocaquatics classes take place at the school's Pinecrest facility, as well at the pool at Gulliver Academy.

- Ocaquatics, 13408 SW 131st St., Miami; 305-969-7946, www.ocaquatics.com

Acting

Inside Out Theatre Company isn't just for pint-sized drama queens. Since 1998, this nonprofit company has been igniting kids' creativity with classes that teach theater craft and develop self-esteem and team-building skills.

Semester-long programming starts with “The Play’s the Thing,” introducing the magic of the stage to kids as young as 7. Performance classes include improv and musicals for students in their teens. Adult classes are available, as well. The new semester begins in January.

Classes are limited to 12 students and are held at venues including Weston Community Center, Inna’s Hall of Fame and the Museum of Art. Classes are \$210-\$395. Register early and the company will knock \$35 off tuition.

- Inside Out Theatre Company; 954-385-3060, www.insideouttheatre.org.

Dancing

The fine points of the fox trot, the romance of the rhumba — these talents and more can be yours when you study with Fred Astaire. OK, Fred himself is no longer available, but you get the next best thing at the Fred Astaire Dance Studio in Coral Gables.

Vlad and Vera Kosarev offer both private instruction and group lessons, teaching wallflowers how to blossom on the dance floor. Single classes are \$15, less when you sign up for a series.

- Fred Astaire Dance Studio, 4008 Aurora St., Coral Gables; 305-443-0085, www.fredastairecoralgables.com

Drawing

For 25 years, Bakehouse Art Complex has been a haven for South Florida artists. Fledgling Picassos can master the fundamentals in a four-week, sight-size drawing workshop that begins in January. Class is limited to 10 students; cost is \$180.

- Bakehouse Art Complex, 561 NW 32nd St., Miami; 305-576-2828, www.bacfl.org.

Yoga

Give the gift of inner peace and outer buffness at Miami Life Center. This Miami Beach mecca offers yoga classes all day, every day, from Ashtanga basics and gentle therapeutic movement to intensive Mysore for the serene of spirit and agile of limb. The center also offers workshops, retreats and individual counseling, from holistic health to life coaching. Individual yoga classes are \$18. Discount packages include a series of five classes for \$85 and unlimited monthly membership for \$180.

- Miami Life Center, 736 Sixth St., Miami Beach; 305-534-8988, www.miamilifecenter.com.