

Cooking classes, just in time for the holidays

BY SUE ARROWSMITH - SPECIAL TO THE MIAMI HERALD

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Miami Culinary Institute at MDC serves up creative fun for little ones with popular gingerbread house decorating holiday class. COURTESY OF MIAMI CULINARY INSTITUTE

Andrea Ellis, culinary manager at Williams-Sonoma Lincoln Road, has so far prepped, fried and roasted eight turkeys in two weeks. With Thanksgiving around the corner, the store has expanded its offerings of free cooking classes, including festive side dishes, desserts and cocktails.

“I think I’m having ham for Thanksgiving after this,” Ellis jokes.

From decorating gingerbread houses to preparing an authentic Indian feast, this holiday season several South Florida stores, institutes and other establishments will be hosting cooking classes for all ages, diverse interests and budgets.

Here’s a list of some local cooking classes:

Williams-Sonoma Lincoln Road

- 1035 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach (similar classes are available at other locations).
- More information: 786-276-9945 or <http://www.williams-sonoma-lincolnroad.eventbrite.com/>

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Thanksgiving Desserts

There's always room for dessert! Learn to bake classics, such as pumpkin and pecan pies, as well as pumpkin cheesecake and other creative hybrids.

- **When:** 11 a.m. to noon Sunday and 6 to 7 p.m. Monday.
- **Cost:** Free.

Gingerbread House Decorating Class

The store's culinary staff will assemble the gingerbread houses in advance. Class attendees decorate the houses (suitable for all ages) and take them home after.

- **When:** 10 to 11 a.m. Dec. 6.
- **Cost:** \$30 per house.

Ina's Holiday Feast

Come see a demonstration of how to prepare some of Food Network celebrity chef Ina Garten's favorite holiday recipes. Garten is the host of *Barefoot Contessa*.

- **When:** 11 a.m. to noon Dec. 7.
- **Cost:** Free.

New Year's Eve Party – Simple and Splendid

Ring in the New Year with simple-to-prepare festive cocktails, savory appetizers and sweet treats.

- **When:** 11 a.m. to noon Dec. 28.
- **Cost:** Free.

Whole Foods Market (similar classes available at other locations)

- 1020 Alton Rd., Miami Beach.
- More information: 305-938-2800.

Sign up at <http://www.wholefoodsmarketsouthbeach.eventbrite.com/>
(<http://www.wholefoodsmarketsouthbeach.eventbrite.com/>).

Kid's Club: Mason Jar, Holiday Cookies & Hot Cocoa

Whole Foods Market employees will help kids compile holiday cookie ingredients or hot cocoa and package them in jars as unique holiday gifts.

- When: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 20.

- Cost: Free.

Ayesha's Kitchen

- 9105 SW 115th Ter., Miami.

- More information: 305-254-0693 or <http://www.ayeshaskitchen.com/> (<http://www.ayeshaskitchen.com/>).

Ayesha D'Mello's classes are not just about cooking; it's a whole experience. She shows how to prepare authentic Indian dishes and then students get to enjoy a sit-down dinner poolside at her Kendall home. Each three-hour class includes introduction to Indian spices, cooking tips and techniques, dinner and a printed recipe to take home.

Mogul Emperors Feast

Treat your guests to a six-course dinner they'll never forget, including chicken tikkas for starters and chicken biriyani (layered marinated chicken and rice) as the main course.

- When: 6 to 9 p.m. Dec. 12.

- Cost: \$75.

Holiday Entertaining – Appetizers/Chutneys/Dessert

Learn to make exotic holiday appetizers, condiments and desserts, such as hariyali shrimp and mixed vegetable pastries to be paired with date and tamarind chutney and mint cilantro chutney. Also featuring the popular Ras Malai dessert and mango laasi beverage.

- When: noon to 3 p.m. Dec. 14.

- Cost: \$75.

Miami Culinary Institute at MDC

- 415 NE Second Ave., Miami.

- More information: 305-237-3276 or www.miamidadeculinary.com/culinarium (<http://www.miamidadeculinary.com/culinarium>).

Getting Ready for the Holidays with Foundations of Dough Preparation

Class exposes students to various dough preparation techniques including pâte sucrée, brisee and puff pastry. Dough will be used in a variety of sweet and savory products, including quiches, empanadas and tarts.

- When: 6 to 9 p.m. Dec. 3.
- Cost: \$75.

Basic Holiday Cake Decoration Using Fondant

This three-part class will focus on the fundamental skills of cake decorating using fondant. Pastry Chef CJ will demonstrate techniques and tricks of the trade to mix, mask, roll and cover the cake.

- When: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Dec. 4, 11 and 18.
- Cost: \$175.

Party Hors D'Oeuvres with Wine pairing

Join Chef Nidia to prepare cold and warm hors d'oeuvres, including crab cake pops, chorizo and brie cheese wantons, truffle polenta bites, and more. Also learn to pair wines with these appetizers.

- When: 6 to 8 p.m. Dec. 5.
- Cost: \$65.

Make and Decorate Your Holiday Gingerbread House

Craft your own gingerbread house from start to finish. You design it and choose the decorations. Fee includes one gingerbread house. Free admission for one child (ages 6 to 10) with each paying adult.

- When: 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Dec. 13.
- Cost: \$50.

Creating Holiday Cookies

Learn to make gourmet cookies for family and friends, including merengue, French macarons, biscotti, oatmeal and chocolate chip cookies.

- When: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Dec. 20.
- Cost: \$75.

The Real Food Academy

- 9612 NE Second Ave., Miami Shores.

- More information: 786-395-0355 or <http://www.therealfoodacademy.com/> (<http://www.therealfoodacademy.com/>).

At The Real Food Academy, where the slogan is “We don’t change the dish, we change the ingredients,” the focus is on teaching adults and children to cook dishes that are healthy and tasty.

Dinner with Santa the ‘Foodie’

A class for adults to cook holiday-inspired healthy dishes, including a mouth-watering dessert.

- When: 7 to 10 p.m. Dec. 18.
- Cost: \$65.

Kids Cook for the Holidays (ages 3-13)

Fun and creative class designed for children to learn healthy holiday recipes.

- When: 10 to 11:30 a.m. Dec. 20.
- Cost: \$35.

Holiday Cooking Mommy/Daddy and me (ages 3 and up)

Make guilt-free holiday treats using organic and alternative ingredients.

- Date/Time: TBA.
- Cost: \$45.

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

- 10901 Old Cutler Rd., Coral Gables.
- More information: 305-667-1651, ext. 3322, or www.fairchildgarden.org/education/adults (<http://www.fairchildgarden.org/education/adults>).

Tasty Tapas for Your Holiday Gathering

Chef Christopher Bulgarin will demonstrate how to make mini Spanish tortilla and chorizo bites topped with a garlic aioli, grilled Spanish smoked shrimp with roasted red pepper rouille sauce, grilled baby octopus on a smoked paprika fried potato, and olives a la madrilène.

- When: 10 a.m to 1 p.m. Dec. 2.
- Cost: \$55.

An earlier version of this story incorrectly stated that Ina Garten would be demonstrating her favorite holiday recipes at Williams-

Sonoma. In fact, the store's culinary staff will be demonstrating those recipes.