

# Cooking schools have recipe for saving money

by **Colleen Sparks** - May. 8, 2009 10:33 AM  
Special for the Republic

In today's weak economy prices at some grocery stores and restaurants can be a little hard to swallow.

But cooking schools and other Tempe area businesses have the recipe to help residents save money while still enjoying meals.

At Cooking Studio AZ, the live Viking kitchen appliances demonstration showroom for SunWest Appliance Distributing in Tempe, students learn how to prepare French country cuisine, international chicken recipes, pizza, grilled pork Thai salad wraps, Moroccan fare and various other meals. Students can sample the food and take home recipes in the two-hour adult classes that cost \$29 to \$59.

"It's really designed to help all cooks, whether they are just stepping into the kitchen for the first time or highly experienced, to take their skills to the next level," said Candy Leshner, director of Cooking Studio AZ and a Tempe resident. "Their investment in coming to one class can lead to years of savings" financially, Leshner said.

Students can interact with experienced chefs including Rachel Albert-Matesz, who developed recipes for author Barry Sears' Zone Meals in Seconds, and Tottie Kaya, chef and owner of Tottie's Asian Fusion Restaurant in Scottsdale in the showroom on South Kyrene Road north of Warner Road.

On a recent Friday night 22 students joked, drank wine and sampled cannelloni and chicken piccata at Cooking Studio AZ.

"We are eating at home a lot more now that the economy has tanked," student Judy Wade of Ahwatukee said. "It's much more fun as you learn new (cooking) skills."

Cooking student Richard Filley of Mesa said he is "always looking for cooking tips."

"I'm doing a lot more cooking than I used to," partly because of the economy, and also because "it's a lot more healthy," Filley said.

Simply Impressive Cooking School in Mesa teaches students everything from appetizers to desserts in healthy and more decadent recipes. Students learn how to grill, cook chicken in three ways and other quick dishes for the "average person," owner Judy Toth said. Most classes last three hours and cost \$63.

"If you have some pretty basic skills laid out you can make everything," Toth said.

Simply Impressive also has children's cooking camps that start at \$140 a week.

Boxed Greens, an organic food delivery service in Tempe, sells certified organic fruits, vegetables, meats, baked goods and other products delivered around the Valley.

A Boxed Greens, family-size, essential seasonal gift box with about two to three cooking vegetables, plus fruit, salad vegetables, potatoes and other staples costs \$53.50 and could possibly feed a family of at least four people for about a week, company owner Larry Wiener said. Recipes are included with orders.

Boxed Greens inspects every item to ensure freshness and runs sales weekly.

"It comes a lot fresher and lasts a lot longer for the consumer," Wiener said.

Those who prefer eating out can order breakfast and lunch specials under \$7 and most dinners for less than \$20 at Culinary Solutions Cafe, 6340 S. Rural Road.

"If we can bring people in and give them the same quality food for a little bit less money they'd be more inclined to come back," Culinary Solutions co-owner Karen Vojtek said.