

# The Observer Food Monthly

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## Top ten cookery schools in Europe

We went, we saw, we were conquered... OFM's team of amateur chefs polish their skills on the continent

...gathered  
the greengrocer, baker and butcher where  
he buys his fresh produce. He taught us  
how to make stifádho (beef stew with  
tomatoes and onions), spanokópitta  
(spinach and cheese pie) and baklava (a  
layered filo pie with honey and nuts) as  
well as the other, more experimental  
dishes he's become known for - feta  
mousse, squid in basil sauce and  
courgette parcels stuffed with  
mushrooms. 'I think that cooking is a bit  
of fantasy - a way of expressing yourself,'  
said Stavros as he filled everyone's  
glasses up again. POLLY ROGER BROWN

### **Casa Ombuto** **Tuscany, Italy**

Tel: 0039 34873 63864

[www.italiancookerycourse.com](http://www.italiancookerycourse.com)

High in the hills of the Casentino valley,  
50km south of Florence is Casa Ombuto -  
an amazing house with a swimming pool  
and views to die for. Michele, interpreter  
and frontman, and his wife Carla, one of  
the most respected chefs in Tuscany run  
the inspiring seven-day cookery course,  
held in the cave-like cantina of the villa.

I tried everything from basic pasta-  
making to a delicious wild boar in tomato  
and herb dish. I had a day's excursion  
which ended in the most stunning  
restaurant for dinner, and a day free to  
view the surrounding wildlife or visit  
Florence. The other five days are for  
cooking, which starts at 3pm. This course  
suits those who are keen to learn with  
little experience to those established  
cooks looking to broaden their tastes and  
techniques. WENDY GEOGHEGAN

### **Promenades Gourmandes with** **Paule Caillat** **Paris, France**

available through Gourmet on Tour  
Tel: 020 7396 5550

This is a non-residential cookery course  
designed to be slotted into a weekend, or  
long visit to Paris. You could just about  
do it on Eurostar for the day. It's a terrific  
way of discovering the food underbelly of  
the city, as the Cordon Bleu chef and  
guide, Paule Caillat, leads the class round  
markets, butchers, the kitchens at the  
Hotel de Crillo, truffle and herb shops.  
You then return to Caillat's kitchen  
in the Marais and cook...

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