

## What's cooking?

Whether you want to learn the basics, update your skills, discover new cuisines or add a nutritious twist to old favourites, taking up a cookery course could be just the recipe for a happy, healthy you, writes Sharon Diviney



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Kate Wright of Galway Cookery School. Photo: Andrew Downes, XPOSURE

Cooking is not like learning how to ride a bicycle. The techniques needed to turn a bag of veg into a wholesome soup, or a cut of beef into a tasty stew, have limited shelf lives. Our skills can be lost over time, advises Cara Gray, a community dietician with the HSE.

It's a sentiment shared by Galway Cookery School tutor Kate Wright, who ran the Cobblestone Café in the city for 10 years. "I have a lot of people who want to learn how to make their own brown bread. They really have a passion for it because if this tradition dies, it's gone for the children as well."

Raised in Fethard, Co Tipperary, Kate specialises in vegetarian cooking.

"Before the recession, I had to do two nights a week to keep up with demand. Now they're coming back again, with a lot of people that are retired. They're getting gift vouchers and coming to do cookery classes."

Her earlier teaching days were spent with new students at NUI Galway. "I did vegetarian cooking on a budget. I showed them how to make frittata, stuff with lentils, eggs, and potatoes - you can live on it. You have your protein and carbs and for people that have very little money, they can make a fabulous meal out of nothing. I'd be into quinoa because it's very light on the digestive system. It's full of protein, and a lot of people after chemo, that's what they're put on. So I do a lot of classes for people who come to learn about vegetarian cooking. I'm not a nutritionist but I'm very knowledgeable on what people digest, and processed food and all that. I go out to schools and I see what children bring, and it shocks me."

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