

# delicious. TEST REPORT

## THE COOKERY SCHOOL



**WHERE** Cookery School  
at Little Portland  
Street, London  
([cookeryschool.co.uk](http://cookeryschool.co.uk))

**THE COURSE** The Ultimate Fish and Shellfish  
(one day), £195, including breakfast, coffee  
and lunch with wine and dessert

**TESTED BY** Isabella Bradford

**WHAT IT'S LIKE** Cookery School at Little Portland Street is a spatula's throw from London's Oxford Circus, split over two floors of a narrow building. The kitchens are sleek, professional-looking and minimalist, but with all the KitchenAid appliances you could dream of. The classes of 10-12 students take place at individual prep stations on steel workbenches. I've always wondered what it must be like to be a chef, so when I arrived I was excited to see the restaurant-style working environment – everything stainless-steel and shiny clean. I put on my apron eagerly and mingled with the other students.

**WHAT I LEARNED** When it comes to cooking fish at home I lack a bit of confidence. Like most Brits I tend to avoid anything more adventurous than the 'big five' (cod, haddock, tinned tuna, salmon, prawns) as the prep has usually already been done, so I was keen to get stuck in and extend my fishy horizons. We spent the first hour watching teacher Carolina (see right) prepare a huge array of seafood, carefully explaining how to get around the tricky bits, before we got to practise ourselves.

She taught us techniques such as skinning, filleting and boning and we learned the most appropriate methods of cooking various types of fish and shellfish,



**NOT THE USUAL SUSPECTS**  
Learn to prep a wide  
range of fish in a  
pro-style kitchen



including grilling, frying, baking, poaching and steaming, plus we made a range of beautiful sauces. There was more than enough seafood to go around, so everyone in the class deveined prawns; debearded mussels; cut off the tentacles and removed the head, beak and internal quill from squid before slicing the body into rings;

and (my favourite part) filleted a whole mackerel – something I've always wanted to learn. Next we worked in small groups to chop the other ingredients we were going to use. Carolina continued to give tips throughout, explaining how to chop onions, deseed chillies and peel garlic cloves with ease.

**THE VERDICT** The first half of the class was really hands-on and, even though it was messy (my clothes smelled pretty pungent afterwards), everyone in the class was visibly chuffed as we sat down to the lunch we'd prepared – fishcakes, seafood bisque, salt-baked fish, squid stew, marinated prawns and more. I found the second half of the class less engaging because a lot of the recipes were fairly simple and we didn't do as much cooking.

The class is fast-paced – do wear comfy shoes as there's no sitting down – but I left feeling really happy with the food I'd cooked and the skills I'd learned.

*The Cookery School at Little Portland Street is part of the Independent Cookery Schools Association ([independentcookeryschools.co.uk](http://independentcookeryschools.co.uk))*



## THE MAKE-AT-HOME RECIPE

### Griddled scallops with oriental dressing

SERVES 2 AS A STARTER. HANDS-ON TIME 15-20 MIN



If you can't find apple concentrate you can get it online from [healthysupplies.co.uk](http://healthysupplies.co.uk). Otherwise heat 100ml fresh apple juice in a pan over a medium heat and reduce until syrupy.

Carolina the tutor removed the flavourful scallop roes for neatness, but we prefer to leave them on.

- 6 fresh sustainable scallops, shelled
- Toasted sesame oil for drizzling
- 2 handfuls salad leaves to serve
- 2 tsp sesame seeds, lightly toasted in a dry frying pan

#### FOR THE ORIENTAL DRESSING

- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1.5cm piece stem ginger, grated
- ½ tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp rice vinegar
- ½ tbsp teriyaki sauce
- Squeeze orange juice
- 1 tsp apple concentrate (see tips)

**1** For the dressing, in a small bowl, whisk together all the ingredients until thickened, then set aside.

**2** Clean the scallops by slicing off any muscle fibres (discard) and the orange and white roes, if you want (see tips). Pat the scallops dry with kitchen paper, then lightly drizzle with the sesame oil.

**3** Heat a ridged griddle pan (or frying pan) until smoking hot, add the scallops and cook for 2-3 minutes until starting to turn golden brown on one side. Turn (in the same order as you added them to the pan) and cook for another 2-3 minutes. They should be lightly golden on top and still feel quite springy when touched. Don't overcrowd the pan or the scallops will steam. Transfer to a plate and season with salt and pepper.

**4** Toss the salad leaves in a small bowl with a little of the oriental dressing, then divide between 2 plates. Arrange the scallops on top, drizzle with more dressing and sprinkle with the sesame seeds.

**PER SERVING** 264kcal, 17.8g fat (2.8g saturated), 19.2g protein, 6.2g carbs (5.6g sugars), 0.6g salt, 1.1g fibre →



## THE TAKE-HOME TIPS

### By expert teacher Carolina Catala-Fortuny



end up with overly salty food.

- The seeds in a fresh chilli don't really break down during cooking

- When making a sauce, soup or stew, don't season with salt at the beginning because the flavours concentrate during cooking and you may

so, unless you're making a hot chilli sauce, remove them.

- When a recipe starts with cooking onions, add them to the pan before it heats up completely so they warm through – this makes them less likely to burn at the edges. And don't be tempted to stir constantly – put your spoon down and walk away so the sugars in the onion have a chance to caramelise in the heat.