

Back to Basics: Why Can't We Cook?

Submitted by: Full Portion Media (Administration)

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In the last 10 years, home cooking has gone out the window! The number of meals cooked in a family home has dropped dramatically; nearly 50% of us used to prepare at least one home cooked meal a day, whereas now only 15% prepare a meal a day for their family. The explanation for this drop can be contributed to society's growing obsession with time as well as the availability of prepared family meals.

According to Kumud Gandhi, food scientist and founder of The Cooking Academy, one of the most significant explanations for this is the absence of cookery and dietary health education in schools. She comments:

"When I was at school, cooking was on the curriculum as Home Economics. It has since disappeared from the curriculum many parents let alone children have little understand of simple cooking techniques, not to mention any knowledge of nutrition and dietary intolerance. Kumud sees this as a major pitfall of the school system. Currently, children learn lessons that 90% of them will never use such as trigonometry, yet when it comes to something they need to do three times a day, it's completely ignored. Understanding nutrition is essential to maintain a person's daily health, knowing what we are putting in our bodies and how it's likely to react is vital information to ensure that children are eating the right things during their formative years."

Kumud regularly presents at schools across the country as she campaigns to bring healthy cooking skills into the classroom so that schools offer education in basic nutrition and food science which she believes are fundamental every day life skills and general well being. With problems of obesity on the one hand and anorexia and food related illnesses on the other, it is increasingly important for young people to learn how to eat correctly and learn how to cook for themselves. By learning to cook to nourish ourselves we can effectively reduce some of the health issues and common ailments we face today.

The courses Kumud runs in schools are customized for a younger audience. Children benefit from both visual (by way of demonstration) and hands-on experience, so by teaching basic kitchen skills they feel empowered to be confident around food, experiment and most importantly, to develop skills that will enable them to cook for themselves. Kumud teaches about different food groups to maximise children's learning and growth potential, vitamins, minerals, necessary for good development and simple recipes that will enable children to have a go at cooking everyday food.

She also offers a teenager cooking course at her Cooking Academy in Rickmansworth ideally suited to teenagers or young people who are about to embark on their first time away from home. The class teaches teenagers the basic techniques to help them get through the university years. Classes include: A tour of everyday herbs and spices, cooking 5 different meal components, full recipe pack. All ingredients are provided as well as lunch and refreshments.

For more information please visit www.thecookingacademy.co.uk or email Erin at erin@fullportion.com or call 0845 225 1500.

Editor's Notes:

After a career in the commercial world, Kumud Gandhi went on to pursue her life-long ambition of working with food and re-trained in food science at the London Food Centre. She now runs a very successful Cooking Academy and catering company The Saffron House. Often called upon to provide expert comment for national print media, radio and television, Kumud offers a unique insight into the diverse world of cooking and a deep understanding of the nutritional and medicinal value of foods. In April 2009, stunning canapés created by Kumud debuted in a sophisticated cocktail party scene on our TV screens alongside actors Ray Winston and Parminder Nagra in the compelling ITV drama “Compulsion”. Kumud has also worked closely with Fashion TV and recently catered for the launch of “The World’s Most Expensive Suit”.