

Learning to Cook From the Heart

by Kristin Underwood, San Diego, CA on 02.16.09

FOOD & HEALTH



Image via: [HipCooks](#)

Owner and Chef Monica Reti wants to teach you to do just that with [HipCooks](#) - a fun, experiential cooking class (in Portland and Los Angeles), that teaches you to slow down, enjoy your food and cook from the heart. Measuring cups? Rules? Who needs 'em.



[Classes](#) are offered in two Los Angeles locations and a Portland location, and actually take place in specially designed, sustainably crafted kitchens. The Portland kitchen was designed by **Brad Medows** to build off of and improve upon the sustainable Los Angeles kitchens. All kitchens and offices are paperless. All food is locally sourced

from Farmers Markets as much as possible, and leftovers are eaten and/or composted. Containers are all made from recycled materials and cleaning products are all non-toxic.

Materials for the construction of the kitchen were all sourced from recycled supplies and Medows took a very minimalist design - constructing a kitchen with everything you might need, and nothing you don't, not to mention the Portland kitchen has a very warm and inviting feel. The water is heated by a tankless water heater and all appliances are high efficiency labeled appliances. The lighting is all energy efficient and a skylight was even cut into the ceiling so chefs can take advantage of natural lighting as much as possible.



Taking the pressure off cooking the perfect meal by not using recipes, learning to mix flavors, deleting the classroom setting and learning the "why" behind the order of mixing are all key points of instruction built into the classes. The instructors also teach you how to properly flip a saute pan and how to know when meat is done.

Classes also have themes - like learning to cook a romantic dinner for two, or how to cook for the surprise dinner guest, and also have themes like "Persian Immersion" and "Una Noche de Espana - a Tapas Class". Newbie? No problem. Total Foodie? Also no problem. Classes are geared towards teaching you how to boil water, as well as, how to cook a Moroccan dinner for 15, all in a comfortable, friendly, You-Can-Do-This type setting. Classes also accommodate both meat eaters and

vegetarians/vegans.



Price for each class: \$55 - which includes healthy, fresh and organic (where available) ingredients, as well as supplies, beverages and wine. After each class, students sit down and enjoy the fruits of their labors together. Locations in Seattle and Austin will open up in 2009. Hip Cooks