



*A uniquely flexible
catering service
providing fine meals
at home
for you and your guests*

***Patricia Latham and Paul Marsden
Partners in Your Kitchen***

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*For more than three years,
Patricia Latham has been cooking
for the proprietor of
three fine Midlands restaurants,
for his guests
(social and professional),
for his sons
(who have Swiss catering qualifications)
and for his senior chefs
(who have been known to 'borrow' her recipes).*

*Next time you give a dinner party,
she and her partner could be
cooking for you.*



A little about the partners...

Patricia Latham has brought up two sons and been a private nanny, a nursery-school assistant, an office receptionist, office manager for the family business, a DTI researcher in a hospital A&E unit, a tourist information officer – and always a dedicated cook. In 1991 she opened a guest house in Normandy's beautiful Calvados countryside. Then, in 1995, she found herself managing, and cooking in, a large country house for a successful restaurateur and hotelier. She not only survived over three years cooking for this most demanding employer – on a four-oven Aga, with only a Baby Belling for backup – but came out of the job with a glowing testimonial.

At the end of 1996 she met Paul Marsden, with whom she discovered an extraordinary range of shared interests, many centred on France and its wonderful food and wine. Above all, they share a real love of cooking.

Paul's career began in Sixties London, in advertising and public relations, and it was during this exciting time that he began to take a serious interest in eating and cooking. At the end of the 'swinging' decade, he moved to Cornwall to become a teacher, and pursued the same profession in Derby. In 1981 he began training teachers to use computers, and still does so as a freelance educational consultant. The kitchen has always been where he relaxes after long days with his computers. He enjoys many kinds of food, but Italian and French cuisines are his undoubted favourites. He also delights in tracking down producers of good wines in remote corners of France and Italy, buying their products in bulk and bottling them at home. Recently, he published a series of articles on the subject in *Living France* magazine, and he and Patricia spent their 1998 summer holiday in Provence, researching the next series. They returned with over 200 litres of wine – and recollections of many delightful tasting sessions and memorable meals.

We are delighted to announce the launch of what we believe to be a unique individual catering service, provided for lovers of fine food by lovers of fine food.

*Unique first (and foremost) because it is built around Patricia's very special skills and experience. Her former employer is an extremely demanding diner, used to visiting the world's finest restaurants to set the standards for his own. At home, he expects truly excellent **home cooking**. For over three years, that is just what Patricia, as his house manager and cook, has provided – mostly for small gatherings, but she has also single-handedly prepared buffet meals for over 30 and directed professional caterers at full dinners for similar numbers.*

Unique also because we are dedicated and enormously experienced home cooks – not professional chefs. The food we cook for you will be home cooking – but of a very high standard indeed, made with love from the finest ingredients we can buy. So, if you want to hide us in the kitchen and claim all the credit for yourself, your guests may even believe you.

*Unique because we offer total flexibility. We will tailor the support we provide to suit **your** needs on **your** night with **your** guests in **your** home. So, whether you want to indulge family and friends or to impress some very special business contacts, we can help. We can cook the whole meal in your own kitchen, leaving everything clean and tidy. Or we can work as partners with you on the preparation and presentation of the meal. Or we can simply produce one or two courses for you to present (as your own if you like – we will even give you more-or-less complete recipes in case your guests ask for them).*

Finally, we are at least unusual in that we are not setting out to build a large business – just to earn part of our living doing the things we love best and do best. We will not compromise on the quality of our ingredients or our work, but neither will we ask outrageous prices. The meal we cook for you will cost less than one of comparable quality (if you can find it) in a decent restaurant.

Why a catering service?

We want to cook for a living, but neither of us has any illusions about the restaurant business – we know that working in a commercial kitchen would be the fastest way for both of us to lose our enthusiasm for cooking. But catering for private dinner parties fits our wider plans perfectly, allowing us to cook on a sensible domestic scale, maintain our high standards and work to a flexible timetable.

That last point is important, because frequent visits to France are an essential part of our lives. We need to look after our home in Calvados, which we plan to have ready for guests in Summer 1999. We need to shop for ingredients and equipment we cannot find in England. We need regular contact with our French friends. And we need a regular 'fix' of markets and restaurants and...well, just France. Above all, these visits rekindle our enthusiasm for a lifestyle in which le dîner is a profoundly important family and social institution.

Our vision

If you love eating and entertaining as much as we do, you want to be able to relax and enjoy food with your guests – and we know from our own dinner parties that producing an ambitious meal, probably for a much larger group than you feed at family mealtimes, is far from relaxing. At least one member of the family ends up exhausted and stressed – and, worst of all, so saturated with the tastes and smells of the cooking food that he or she has no appetite, tastes nothing when the time comes to eat and cannot even participate fully in the conversation round the table.

One solution is to hire the kind of professional caterers who do weddings and other large functions, many of whom offer excellent food and service. But they really are 'restaurants on wheels', with conventionally trained chefs, kitchen assistants and silver-service waiting staff. Patricia has managed large dinners produced by top caterers, and has found that they have real trouble coping in even the best-equipped domestic kitchens (especially those with Agas). That demands something different.

So does producing food which, however special, still has the feel of real home cooking.

Both require exactly the kind of expertise that Patricia accumulated over the years as a wife and mother, developed while running her French guest house and has refined to a high professional standard facing the challenges of the last three.

So our simple idea was born: take two people who love cooking together for their own friends and families, and transplant them into your kitchen to do the same for you.

Flexibility

Then came the realisation that catering for social events in clients' homes demands total flexibility. People have different notions of what kind of event is right for them, and different ideas of how much hands-on involvement they want to have.

So at one extreme we will move into your kitchen for the day and do all the shopping, preparation and cooking, leaving you free to prepare the house for your guests, welcome them, entertain them and serve the meal. One of the worst aspects of entertaining is clearing up after your guests have left – or the following morning – even if you do have a dishwasher, so while you are eating, we will be clearing up, and at the end of the evening you will have a spotless kitchen. If you want table service as well, you might be better off with the 'restaurants-on-wheels' kind of caterer, but if you like what we have to offer but also want to be served we will try to find someone who can do a professional job.

At the other end of the spectrum, we will prepare one or two dishes to be fitted into your meal.

Between the two lies an infinity of possibilities. Remember: this is your event; you decide how you want to run it and you decide what support you need from us. Sitting down and exploring the options with you is an essential part of the service.

This flexibility extends to the type of meal you want, and to the time of day. For example, we are happy to produce a Sunday lunch – traditional British, French, Italian or whatever. Or, if you and your weekend guests are rising late after a long evening at the table, we can do an equally traditional brunch – the classic English breakfast enhanced and extended into a main meal that will really kick-start your jaded digestive systems. Patricia's former employer's favourite Saturday lunch is

her own fish, chips and mushy peas (with her secret batter recipe – the one most of the chefs asked for) in which, as a Yorkshire lass with Scottish roots, she combines a healthy respect for tradition with the craftsmanship of a skilled and dedicated cook. We are also happy to produce a range of unusual and intriguing snacks for parties and buffets.

Planning the meal with you

If, after reading this book and chatting with us on the telephone, you decide that you would like us to do a meal for you, one of us will visit you to work out the details and costs.

First, we want to hear about your own tastes and brainstorm with you the kind of menu you want.

Then we will need to know how many people you are entertaining and whether any of them have special dietary requirements (a vegetarian dish or a separate dessert for someone with diabetes, for example) or strong likes and dislikes. Now we will be in a position to agree a detailed menu with you.

The next section contains descriptions of a few of the dishes we enjoy cooking (and eating) most, but these are only intended to give you a feel for our attitudes and approach to cooking and eating. We do not limit ourselves to any set range of dishes. We have a vast and constantly growing library of recipes, and we are happy to research and interpret any dish you ask for. Our aim is to maximise everyone's enjoyment and avoid disappointments.

Of course, it is important for us to see your kitchen so that we know what equipment and utensils we must bring with us on the big day.

Then we need to decide how you want to divide the work between you and ourselves. Will you concentrate on serving the meal, or will you be doing some of the cooking yourself? Do you want us to shop for the ingredients? At this point we can draw up a detailed schedule.

Following this visit, we will telephone you to quote a price. If you wish to go ahead, we will send you a written quotation and ask you to confirm your acceptance in

writing.

Shopping

A good cook can work miracles with quite ordinary ingredients, but outstanding meals demand outstanding raw materials. We have developed good relationships with a number of excellent suppliers.

Where possible, we try to use free-range and organic ingredients rather than the products of intensive farming. This is not just out of concern for the animals: we do believe the creatures that feed us deserve our respect and compassion, but we are also convinced that animals reared without undue stress and fed a natural diet produce the best-tasting and healthiest meat, eggs and dairy produce. By the same token, fruit and vegetables grown naturally on healthy land, rather than on depleted soils kept fertile and pest-free with synthetic chemicals, are more nutritious and – most important – really do taste better .

Because the bottom line for us is quality on the table. We will always buy the ingredients which we believe will give you the most enjoyable food. We know that we are catering for a special occasion, and while we will respect your preferences we will not indulge our own fads.

The fine art of feasting

This section is designed to tell you as much as possible about our attitudes and approach to the whole business of eating, using descriptions of a few of the dishes we enjoy most. It will give you some idea of what we feel we do best and, we trust, communicate something of our total love of good food. We hope you will find it as mouthwatering to read as we found it to write.

We British seem to have lost the fine art of feasting – if we ever had it. Instead of making every main meal a celebration (because that is what a feast is) of good food and wine, company and conversation, many of us cannot wait to get away from the table (assuming we actually bother to sit down at one) and get on with Something More Important.

For vast numbers of French, Italians and many other nationalities – in spite of gloomy predictions based on the spread of burger and other fast-food establishments – there is Nothing More Important. French parking meters still give us two hours for nothing at lunchtime, and in many gîtes you find dining chairs but no easy chairs. The main meal of the day is the main social event of the day, to be enjoyed over a number of hours.

That is the kind of meal we like – one consisting of lots of quite-small courses with long pauses between, taken at such a leisurely pace that we digest our food almost as fast as we eat it and never feel really full. That is important, because it means we enjoy the last course just as much as the first – and our favourite puddings definitely deserve to be enjoyed to the full.

We would like to share with you some of our feelings about cooking and eating, so that you can judge whether what we offer is likely to suit you.

Breaking the ice

We like to begin with an informal gathering that allows new acquaintances to get to know one another and old ones to exchange news while enjoying something to coax the digestive system into action – les apéritifs and les amuse-gueules.

For everyday pre-dinner drinks, Paul enjoys a gin-and-tonic while Patricia favours a dry vermouth with lemonade. Some of our male French friends opt for Scotch whisky because it's still a little exotic to them (as are some of the mysterious brands sold in French hypermarkets!), but others prefer a pastis – Pernod or Ricard, diluted to pearly perfection with iced water, slips down like mother's milk but kicks like a mule.

On more than one occasion, a simple glass of Champagne has lifted us instantly out of the dizzy exhaustion you feel after a whole day roaring down the autoroute and allowed us to enjoy to the full our dinner in yet another intriguing provincial restaurant.

Currently, our favourite aperitif is kir. Once this was simply a dry white wine (traditionally a one made in Burgundy from Aligoté grapes) flavoured with crème de cassis, the rich liqueur made from the blackcurrants that Burgundians seem to grow wherever they can't raise good wine grapes. Today the kir family has many members. Using sparkling wine makes a kir royal and Champagne a kir impérial (as if Champagne needs any additions). Kirs are mixed with liqueurs made from every fruit you can imagine – our favourite is crème de mûre sauvage (wild blackberry). In Normandy they make cassis by steeping the fruit in Calvados, then mix it with farmouse cider for a kir Normand. And on our last visit to Provence we were introduced to le myro – a blend of the powerful local vin rosé with crème de myrtille (bilberry).

'Gueule' is a slightly vulgar French word for 'mouth'. An amuse-gueule is something you nibble to keep your mouth entertained until the real food arrives. Posh French restaurants give you elegant scraps of puff pastry or croissant dough turned into tiny pizzas and tarts. We try to make these as near weightless as possible but with really intense flavours, so that they titillate the appetite without spoiling it. Before more everyday meals, we enjoy mild green olives stuffed with anchovies, and our French friends (whose gueules are still amused by all the mass-produced, synthetically flavoured, corn-puff cocktail snacks that have appeared in their supermarkets recently) are terribly impressed when we serve Walkers' ready-salted crisps brought from England.

Finally, we take our seats and the real meal begins. It goes without saying (or should) that there will be plenty of fresh bread on the table, at least until the dessert is served. This is needed to balance dishes served without vegetables, and to mop

up the sauces which are often the most important part of the dish. Water is also essential - preferably a choice of still and naturally-sparkling, both well chilled.

Sensational starters...ecstatic entrées...

Finely-chopped garlic, salted anchovy fillets and generous quantities of coarsely-ground black pepper are fried gently in rather a lot of extra-virgin olive oil until the anchovies disperse mysteriously into the oil. Whole Kalamata olives are pitted and roughly cut up. Salted capers (so much better than the ones in brine or vinegar) are measured out and rinsed. A little fresh chilli is finely minced. Then tender pasta sheets, golden from free-range egg-yolk and freshly rolled from dough made by hand no more than an hour ago, are cut into the wide, ragged-edged pappardelle so typical of Tuscan cuisine and immediately boiled until perfectly al dente. The chilli is added to the hot oil and cooked for a moment. Then the pasta, olives and capers go in, and the whole mixture is turned briefly to coat the pasta with the aromatic oil before being served with generous quantities of freshly-grated Reggiano Parmigiano – the real Parmesan. Pappardelle alla Puttanesca (una puttanesca is a Lady of the Night) has the authentic feel of Italian peasant cooking – simple combinations of superb ingredients creating intense flavours in minutes.

Slices of ripe tomato, oozing fresh fruit flavour, are arranged to form a simple circle on your plate. The cool whiteness of buffalo Mozzarella, artfully arranged on top, is speckled with coarse black pepper, its soothing blandness perfectly balanced by the bite of salted anchovy fillets. The whole arrangement is scattered with plump whole leaves of sweet basil, picked moments ago from the growing plant, and drizzled with green-gold drops of first-pressing extra-virgin olive oil. Insalata Caprese takes its name from the Isle of Capri in the Bay of Naples, but it is now a Pan-European classic. We have found versions everywhere from a neighbourhood restaurant in the Paris suburbs to halfway up a mountain in German-speaking Switzerland. To make it our very own, we like to add slices of our special roasted red peppers, caramelised, skinned and soaked in their own delicious juice for at least a couple of days.

The French have their saucissons secs and the Italians their salame. The Italians have their prosciutto di Parma and the French their jambon d Bayonne. All sublime products of the fine art of salt-curing and air-drying the meat of pigs reared the old-fashioned way. One of the best ways we know to while away half an hour before

the main course is to nibble an assortment of charcuterie, and one of the best-kept secrets we know is that the strong ‘bite’ of some of the saltier sausages and hams is perfectly offset by cold unsalted butter, which is served with the meat rather than the bread in Provence. If some of your guests find the idea of ‘raw’ pork hard to handle, we can provide rillettes – duck or goose meat stewed slowly in its own surprisingly healthy fat (which is said to have similar cholesterol-busting properties to olive oil, as, even more surprisingly, is the soft fat of the air-dried hams and sausages) and then roughly shredded. Any similarity to our own depressing ‘potted meat’ will be forgotten with the first delectable taste. A richly seasoned home-made terrine of pork and liver will make the less adventurous feel even more at home, especially if we call it pâté maison and serve it with a reassuring rack of fresh, hot toast.

Toast goes well with Paul’s very special salmon mousse, too. Tail fillets of choice Scottish salmon are gently steamed and blended to a purée with good mayonnaise, dill and gelatine. Whipped Jersey double cream is folded in to give a rich, smooth and faintly marbled mousse base. More salmon is steamed to milky perfection, and the flakes are layered with the mousse in a mould lined with finely sliced smoked salmon. Chilled and served on a bed of watercress, with a delicate Marie-Rose sauce, this is a truly elegant way to bring jaded taste-buds back to life.

Salad time...

The salad course provides a natural break between two savoury courses, and in the French households where we eat it usually consists of nothing more than dressed lettuce, eaten with plenty of bread. The aim is to rest the digestion and clean the palate – very necessary after salty saucisson, unctuous rillettes or pungent pasta – so the dressing will be a light sauce vinaigrette made from a little mustard, oil and vinegar, perhaps with just a hint of garlic and maybe a touch of basil and...

Well, go much further and you might as well serve a more ornate mixed salad as a starter course.

Marvellous main courses...

Having amused our gueules, given our digestions a light work-out on the entrée and

taken a short break with the salad (with appropriate wines, of course – though water is a good idea with the salad because of the acid vinaigrette), our systems and palates should be in good shape to face the main event.

Please consider fish pie. No – we are quite serious. One of the very best dinner-party main courses we know is a totally special fish pie first described in Sonia Stevenson's A Fresh Look at Fish, which has undergone a process of mutation as a much-requested speciality of Patricia's. Forget every fish pie you ever tasted (or didn't). At least three different fish are carefully chosen from whatever looks best at the fishmonger's today. One will be undyed smoked haddock or cod. The others will be fresh white fish. Each will be steamed just enough to allow it to be flaked, but first we need the sauce: a roux, made after white wine has been fiercely reduced with quite a lot of butter, thickens the milk; nutmeg, mustard and Parmesan add both subtlety and intensity. Sautéed mushrooms are finished with a reduction of lemon juice and carefully folded with the flaked fish into the sauce. The whole is covered with an elegant pattern of potato slices, which have been parboiled and delicately coloured in butter. Chopped spring onions are tossed in the remaining hot butter and sprinkled on top. A final topping of mixed grated cheeses (Gruyère, Emmental and Parmesan) is browned to provide a dish that looks beautiful, tastes sensational and totally justifies all the painstaking work that has gone into it.

Authentic Bolognese sauce (as cooked in Bologna) bears very little resemblance to the unholy mixtures of sloppy tomatoes, fatty mince and too much unbalanced seasoning that have stolen its name. A true ragù Bolognese will contain at least two and preferably three different minced meats, with less tomato than you think. It will be cooked very gently for three hours with onion, carrot and celery, but any herbs will be added when the ragù is combined with the other ingredients of the final dish. Lasagne al Forno (literally 'lasagne in the oven') has been a cliché since the sixties, but with good home-made egg pasta (perhaps interleaved with wilted spinach or an aromatic mix of field mushrooms and porcini – ceps), true ragù and a really rich, creamy sauce, all blended together with freshly sautéed garlic, oregano and basil, topped with cheese and gently browned in the oven, this dish remains a real show-stopper. For a touch of cliché-proofing, we can roll up the pasta to turn it into canelloni, which also makes the dish much easier to serve tidily.

For an authentic taste of Gascony, you might prefer duck breasts fried to a rosy moistness, sliced onto a powerful, dark sauce and served with an intensely concentrated 'jam' of caramelised onions.

For clients who prefer a more traditional main course, we are happy to produce a roast with all the trimmings. Our butchers deliver very fine meat, and the use of a roasting thermometer ensures that its will be cooked exactly to your taste. We have a very special trick that produces the cruchiest golden roast potatoes, and we can promise a gravy of real depth and character, whatever the meat.

We hate the British habit of tipping the main dish onto the plate along with a variety of vegetables, especially if it's a sloppy one like fish pie or lasagne that engulfs them and swamps their flavours. Many dishes are natural combinations of a number of elements – meat, sauce and garnish, for example – but where separate vegetables are needed to balance a meal we prefer to serve a small side-dish of whatever we find to be best in the market on the day, to be eaten alongside the main dish so that the contrasting flavours constantly refresh one another, or as a separate course.

Cheese comes next

We will serve the cheese after the pudding, in the traditional British way, if you ask us (it is your dinner party, after all), but we really prefer it to come first – not just because that's what they do in France but because the wine you drink with it won't taste half as good after one of our diabolical desserts. We will discuss your cheese preferences with you and then serve a balanced mixture of fine British and Continental varieties, but we will take a lot of persuading not to include the sublime Brie de Meaux, made in the same way for 1200 years, and blue Stilton from Colston Bassett near Nottingham. If you are lucky, we may be just back from Normandy with some farmhouse cheeses (Camembert, Pont l'Évêque or Livarot) we've bought in the market. We like to serve our cheese on leaves in a large wicker tray, with a few small bunches of grapes.

Paul eats the rind of Brie and Camembert. He argues that the white penicillium mould outside Brie can't be any more dangerous than the green penicillium mould inside Stilton. Patricia doesn't argue – but she doesn't eat the rind, either. It is important to emphasise that, if we supply real cheeses, we cannot guarantee that they will not upset your stomach – we simply go to suppliers we have been using for years.

We like to eat our cheese alone (except for wine, of course) or with fresh bread, but if you prefer biscuits we will happily supply a good choice.

Sublime sweets...delectable desserts...perfect puddings...

Imagine a real Tiramisù sitting in the middle of your table. A base of Italian Savoiardi biscuits, each dipped for just the right number of seconds in corrosively strong pure Arabica coffee (bought in France because they keep the best for themselves) and generously drizzled with Amaretto (almond liqueur). A thick covering of Mascarpone, Italy's uniquely unctuous cream cheese, beaten with fresh free-range egg-yolks and vanilla sugar, its dense texture actually needing to be lightened with a carefully-judged addition of rich Jersey double cream. Finally, pure cocoa powder sprinkled over seconds before serving gives a covering like brown velvet. Tiramisù means 'pick-me-up', and the dish derives its tonic powers from a potent blend of alcohol, caffeine and monstrous numbers of calories.

Imagine a classic Norman Tarte Fine aux Pommes – except that, having eaten many in good Norman restaurants, we have yet to find one even half as good as Patricia's. A flan case of the most delicate pâte sablée – the most difficult pastry of all to make well, but Patricia has the cool fingers and the feather-light touch it needs. A filling of Bramley apple purée (because some British produce really is the best), cooked not in water but in butter, then finely sieved and laced liberally with farmhouse Calvados (the cider country's answer to brandy) bought direct from the producer. And a topping of elegantly-sliced dessert apples, their edges quickly caramelised and still crisp when the tart reaches your table. Served with Jersey double or Cornish clotted cream, it's a dream. More traditionally, its richness is perfectly balanced by the subtle acidity of crème fraîche from Isigny on Normandy's Côte Fleurie. Or, for the most audacious re-interpretation of classic apple pie and custard, each slice can be served on a pale yellow glossy pool of Crème Anglaise.

We've all seen puddings called things like 'Death by Chocolate', but our domestic re-working of the legendary River Café's best-selling dessert, 'Chocolate Nemesis', is the chocolate pudding to die for. If you thought the Tiramisù was rich... This is a baked mousse made firm by unsalted Normandy butter, light by beaten eggs, sweet by sugar and sensationally seductive by a startling quantity of Lindt dark chocolate (the kind you buy for eating – not cooking chocolate). This awesome dessert is perfectly balanced by a dollop of crème fraîche, a sprinkling of fresh raspberries or cherries and a light dusting of icing sugar on the way to the table.

Then there is trifle, an English classic - the Italians call their version zuppa Inglese – English soup. Paul's has the alcohol in the topping – a fluffy, heady lemon

syllabub developed from a recipe by Elizabeth David – leaving the pure fruit flavours safely preserved between the sponge base and a layer of crème pâtissière.

(Notice that the finishing touches are put to many of these puddings moments before they are served. This is one of our most sacred rules: by all means prepare parts of dishes in advance where this will not compromise the end-result; but, where leaving something even for a few minutes will destroy its freshness, work is planned to allow proper finishing time.)

And to finish...

A fine cup of coffee is the perfect end to a fine meal – but when did you last have one in a British restaurant?

Such devices as cafetières and filters are considered to be French inventions, but every French restaurant we have eaten in serves espresso – tiny, black and concentrated, with that wonderful golden foam the Italians call crema showing that the coffee has been made under the mighty pressure only a proper, lever-operated machine can deliver. The reason a good espresso needs such apparent brutality is that it must be made very quickly, so that the all high-notes of pure coffee flavour are carried to the cup but most of the bitterness and – surprisingly – much of the caffeine are left behind in the grounds.

We hope to be able to bring a serious espresso machine to clients' homes soon. Meanwhile, we use a cafetière and Carte Noire coffee, which we buy in France because it really is a lot better than what the same company exports to Britain.

And to go with the coffee, if you have a tiny space left, some dainty petits fours, our very special chocolate truffles or a simple tablet of the finest dark chocolate...

Looking forward

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this little book and that you have found our philosophy to be in tune with your own tastes and expectations.

If you are planning a dinner or other kind of party and think you would like us to support you in any way, please give us a call. We will be happy to talk over the possibilities with you, without any obligation. Naturally, the more notice you can give us, the more likely we are to be available on your chosen day.

In future, we hope to be offering one-day specialist cookery courses for small groups in our own kitchen, working with a colleague who specialises in bread and yeast cookery and who is married to an international expert on spices and herbs.

Beyond this, we will be offering longer residential courses at our home in Normandy, with shopping in real markets where we can buy food direct from the people who produce it, many on a very small scale in their own gardens. These gourmet holidays will include visits to farms producing the famous cheeses of the region (Camembert, Pont l'Évêque and Livarot), cider and Calvados, and while most meals will be eaten on the premises – outdoors whenever possible, and with the booty from Paul's latest wine-hunts, of course – we like to take our groups out for one night to a really good local restaurant. While you are refining your culinary skills, your family can be enjoying the many tourist attractions of the region – the delightful seaside resorts of the Côte Fleurie, the great basilica of Ste-Thérèse in nearby Lisieux, the beaches where the historic Normandy landings took place, le Mont St-Michel, la Suisse Normande...

Of course, if you prefer you can pass on the cooking lessons and simply enjoy our simple but comfortable rooms, our delicious breakfasts and dinners and the delights of Normandy as part of a more lazy holiday.



Designed and produced by Paul Marsden
