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## Boot camp determines whether you have the chops to become a chef?



Keiser University's culinary arts program teaches students the essentials of cooking with hands-on instruction. Chef and instructor Deborah Buza makes crepes filled with berries and honey-citrus cream cheese. (Photos by Chris Kridler, FLORIDA TODAY)

### Keiser University offers a taste of what it's like

*BY CHRIS KRIDLER*

*FLORIDA TODAY*

Students in white jackets and hats bustle through the hallways, stir pots in delicious-smelling kitchens and flip crepes destined to be filled with honey-citrus cream cheese and berries.

Some of them even practice the chicken dance in preparation for a kids' pizza party at Keiser University in Melbourne.

"In this business, one of the overlooked customers a lot of times is children," Chef Darrin R. Durham tells the students, "and when we get out into the real world, you will be hosting events, whether they be catering, whether they be in your dining room or whatever, for kids, so we've got to learn how to deal with them as well."

High-school students starting a culinary boot camp Friday at Keiser will get a taste of what these older students go through every day.

"It's kind of like a day in the life of a culinary student," says Durham, culinary program coordinator. The free crash course, which already is full, isn't quite as rigorous as college training, but it will help kids determine whether cooking school is for them.

It also will show them that a real restaurant career isn't like what you see on the proliferating cooking shows on TV.

"There you see the end product," Durham says. "You see a lot of things that wouldn't happen in the real world, uniforms that wouldn't happen in the real world. . . . I watch some of the shows, 'Hell's Kitchen' and things like that, with all the dangle earrings for the ladies, and, you know, the hair flying everywhere and the Farrah Fawcett look. It's like, ah, no, that won't happen in a real kitchen. You're going to be wearing a hat or a hairnet."

Real restaurant kitchens don't have as many screaming chefs as you see on TV, either, Durham says.

"It's just such a competitive market out there, I mean, you've got to fight to keep the best employees," he says. "You have to pay them well, give them good benefits. So a lot of that, that you see on TV, is not realistic on both sides, the good stuff and the bad stuff."

Real training involves learning the basics. That's what students in Chef Stephen Poole's class are doing as they chop vegetables and drop them into pots for a brown stock.

"We're taking oxtail bones and browning them a little bit more, adding . . . celery, carrots and onions and getting them to a really dark state," Poole says. "Then that way, you're getting caramel color, which ironically is what Coca-Cola is, vegetables that are caramelized."

He points out the 50-gallon pot of chicken stock they started the day before and shares a taste of the savory oxtail meat on the stove.

"A lot of people have experience at home, but they don't realize what it's like in a commercial kitchen," Poole says.

While his kitchen smells of meat and spices, Chef Deborah Buza's room smells like butter. That's where students are making crepes. The sweet ones have the cream cheese and berries.

"It's absolutely delicious," Buza says.

The savory ones contain sausage made from scratch with pork butt, fresh herbs and spices, red wine, onion and garlic.

Student Tim Raup of Rockledge flips the crepes, cooking them before they're stuffed. He's working toward an associate's degree with a real-world application. "Within the next five years, my brother-in-law and I are going to have our own restaurant," he says.

Durham says Keiser teaches degree students storeroom and ordering procedures, sanitation, cooking, highlights from cuisines around the world and general education. That's more than two years.

Adults can take continuing education classes in a number of techniques and cuisines. And the students coming Friday will get the flavor of a degree in three days.

"In a five-hour class or four-hour class, they learn so much," Durham says. ". . . They're like, 'Oh my God, if I did this over two years, how much would I know?' So that's the whole goal behind it, is just to show them what it's all about, get them interested in it, and help feed their knowledge and their yearn for it."

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## Additional Facts

Keiser classes Keiser University in Melbourne offers culinary arts programs for associate degrees and multilevel classes in continuing education. Here are upcoming one-day cooking classes, held 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with Chef Jack Garrison for \$95. Call 409-4801 for more information.

**July 11: Cajun/Creole.** Includes seafood and sauces.

**July 18: Risotto.** Learn perfect technique.

**July 25: Cultivating the Sophisticated Palate 2.** Elegant flavors and textures in a full menu, including dessert.

**Aug. 1: Asian Soups and Noodles.** Fundamental understanding of Southeast Asian cooking.

**Aug. 8: Ultimate Compliments (sic). Make cooking more complex with opposites and contrasts.**

**Aug. 15: Low and Slow.** Dishes you can cook while you relax, along with interesting sides and desserts.