

Renowned Chef in Lenoir Dining to Teach Three Public Cooking Classes

Contributed by Erin Parsons
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OXFORD, Miss. - Members of the Lafayette-Oxford-University community can improve their cooking skills and learn new recipes through the University of Mississippi Department of Family and Consumer Sciences' three upcoming cooking classes.

Lee Craven in the Lenoir Dining kitchen. UM photo by Nathan Latil.

Renowned chef Lee Craven, FCS food specialist and Lenoir Dining's executive chef, is to teach the skills and techniques used by professional restaurateurs in the following classes, all scheduled at 2 p.m. in Lenoir Hall: Friday (Nov. 21), "Autumnal Feast;" Dec. 12, "Christmas Breads;" and Jan. 16, "Healthy Adventures."

The classes are intended for people with any level of cooking skills, including beginners. Each class costs \$40 per person. Registration and fee payment must be completed at least three days before each class date. To register, e-mail your request to fcs@olemiss.edu or call 662-915-7371.

Craven, who has been featured in leading magazines and newspapers and enjoyed appearances on nationally televised food shows, will be teaching a multitude of different kitchen techniques, from pan searing to basic knife skills.

"The goal of the classes really is to have fun and learn about cooking, ingredients and basic kitchen techniques," said Craven, who was named a "Rising Star of American Cuisine" by the James Beard Foundation in 2004.

The "Autumnal Feast" class is geared toward teaching holiday recipes. Participants will learn to make butternut squash bisque with cardamom, flank steak salad with balsamic vinaigrette, foccacia bread and molten chocolate cake with orange and cinnamon.

Craven will be teaching the art of bread making during "Christmas Breads." He will demonstrate how to make basic dough, brioche, foccacia and pizza dough.

The last class, "Healthy Adventures," will venture into the realm of health food. The recipe list includes a mixed green salad with strawberries, blue cheese and low fat dressing, herb poached salmon with snow peas, whole wheatberries with a carrot and ginger sauce, and baked Alaska with low fat frozen yogurt for dessert.

FCS has scheduled these classes because of numerous requests from the public, said Teresa Carithers, FCS chair.

"We have been asked to provide such opportunities for years," she said. "This is a natural for us, since both our programs (Dietetics/Nutrition and Hospitality Management) have strong foundations in food service systems. Visitors to Lenoir Hall always want our recipes and ask how particular items are prepared."

Craven, who joined the FCS faculty in August, was formerly the executive chef at Madidi, Morgan Freeman's restaurant

in Clarksdale. He has been featured in Bon Appetit, Delta Magazine, Southern Living, Mississippi Magazine, Esquire Japan, The New York Times and Boston Globe. He has appeared on the Food Network and participated in the Julia Child Commemorative Dinner hosted by the James Beard Foundation.

"Many of our faculty members have offered similar seminars as community service activities, but having Chef Craven within our department now allows us to provide a more sustainable program of diverse culinary opportunities," Carithers said. "The cooking classes provide a wonderful way to connect with our university family and the Oxford community at large in a fun way. Individuals who enjoy cooking are very diverse. A cooking class can really develop into a wonderful network of unique friendships."

For more information or to request assistance related to a disability, call 662-915-7371. To learn more about FCA and Lenoir Dining, visit <http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/fcs/dining.html> .