

# 4 Mini breaks

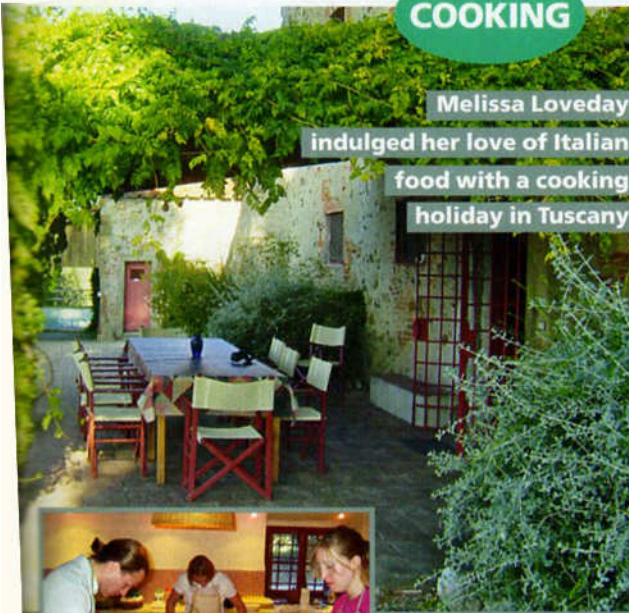
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With these activity weekends, whether you go with your partner, friends or alone, you're sure to have an adventure

**COOKING**

**Melissa Loveday**

**indulged her love of Italian food with a cooking holiday in Tuscany**



Melissa and her fellow trainees are taught how to make fresh pasta

**FOODIE HEAVEN**

'If you love cooking and eating heavenly food, this Italian cooking holiday is for you – just make sure you pack trousers with an elasticated waist!

'Against a backdrop of the Tuscan hills, my fellow trainee chefs and I were taught how to prepare traditional Italian food with local ingredients like mascarpone and dried cod, by our charismatic instructor Simone.

'We also visited the Fattoria di Montechiari vineyard, near Montecarlo, sampling its award-winning wines and touring the awe-inspiring grounds.'

**WHERE I WENT**

'Our villa was set in a remote, picturesque spot in the hills above Lucca. Villa Segalato, with its ensuite rooms, private pool and lounging areas, is part of the Forci estate, which makes its own extra virgin olive oil, olives and honey. We sampled them all, and bought some to take home, too. I only wish I had taken a bigger suitcase.'

**WHAT I LEARNED**

'Simone gave us his grandmother's secret cooking tips and taught us how to fold in egg whites "with love" while making a tiramisu. Each cookery session involved making a pasta dish, a meat dish and a dessert, which we ate on the sunny terrace with a few glasses of Italian wine.'

**WHAT I LOVED**

'The trip was well organised and suited all levels. I went on my own but left with new friends, a full belly and a love of Italy.

'Don't miss meeting Aldo, the grand fromage of La Cacioteca in Lucca, a hidden gem of a cheese shop, which can be smelled some distance away.'

**HOW TO BOOK**

A three-night cooking holiday costs £899 per person, including return flights from Gatwick to Pisa with Flavours Holidays (0131 625 7002; flavoursholidays.co.uk).