



Azeze Abdoney prepares beans during her Middle Eastern cooking class at the 577 Foundation. THE BLADE/ AMY E. VOIGT

# A world of flavors . . .

Cooking classes help you re-create cuisines from many cultures

By MARY BILYEU  
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Toledo is a salad bowl of cultures and cuisines, with local restaurants serving such diverse dishes as Indian chana masala, Japanese sushi, Greek moussaka, Hungarian chicken paprikash, Mexican tamales, and so much more.

But wouldn't it be wonderful to re-create some of that deliciousness in your own kitchen whenever a craving strikes?

Perhaps it's time you took one of the area's many ethnic cooking classes. They are taught by the experts: immigrants who brought the tastes of their homelands with them, second-generation cooks who were raised with the dishes of their ancestors, and professional chefs with a love for international foods.

Here are just a few of the places that offer programs (some regularly, others more sporadically): The 577 Foundation, 577 E. Front St., Perrysburg, 419-874-4174, [577foundation.org](http://577foundation.org); Deepam India, 7406 W. Central Ave., 419-843-1552, [facebook.com/DeepamIndia](http://facebook.com/DeepamIndia); Foodology, 2059 W. Laskey, 567-970-7100, [foodologytoledo.com](http://foodologytoledo.com); Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 740 N. Superior St., 419-243-9186, [holytrinitytoledo.com/greek-cooking-class-series](http://holytrinitytoledo.com/greek-cooking-class-series); the Hungarian Club of Toledo, 224 Paine Ave., 419-698-5195, [facebook.com/HungarianClubofToledo](http://facebook.com/HungarianClubofToledo); the Sofia Quintero Art and Cultural Center, 1225 Broadway, 419-241-1655, [sqacc.org](http://sqacc.org); and the Turkish American Society of Ohio — Toledo, 45 Hilwyck Dr., [cceman82@yahoo.com](mailto:cceman82@yahoo.com), [tasotoledo.com](http://tasotoledo.com).

Jackie Rogers was one of the participants in a class taught by Azeze Abdoney at the 577 Foundation in February. The menu that day included dishes from Mrs. Abdoney's native Lebanon: a fragrant bean stew with rice, creamy yogurt dip, a simple but satisfying omelet, baked egg rolls, and molded cookies imprinted with a delicate pattern.

"I take some of the Middle Eastern classes," Ms. Rogers said, as well as "the Chinese cooking classes." Students get to try samples and then take the recipes home.

Ms. Rogers enjoys taking part in these courses for many reasons: to learn about other cultures, to sample unfamiliar dishes, and — best of all — to meet "some very interesting people," she said.

Because what could be better than friends, fun, and fabulous food?

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Azeze Abdoney, left, instructs students JoEllen Kauffman, front left, Marianne Hauden, front right, Cindy Gatewood, back left, and Tracie Karl, back right, on how to make the best Lebanese yogurt sauce during a Middle Eastern cooking class.



Andy Ayers bastes Lebanese egg rolls.



Azeze Abdoney, center right, and Andy Ayers, right, show students how to make a Lebanese omelet.



JoEllen Kauffman, left, smells a mixture of spices made by Azeze Abdoney while friend Marianne Hauden watches.



Jackie Rogers, left, and Azeze Abdoney, right, plate a Lebanese omelet during the cooking class.



A mixture of spices made by Azeze Abdoney



Lebanese yogurt dip



Lebanese egg rolls



A Lebanese cookie