



Cooking Up a Fresh Feast

Leslie Cerier's popular cooking classes help people turn the earth's bounty into luscious cuisine.

By **Zoe Helene**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRACEY ELLER

Author of five cookbooks, including *Gluten-Free Recipes for the Conscious Cook*, *Going Wild in the Kitchen* and *The Quick and Easy Organic Gourmet*, Leslie Cerier has a gift for creating special diets without sacrificing flavor and satisfaction. We caught up with Cerier as she was preparing for her weeklong cooking class at Rancho La Puerta in March. lesliecerier.com

What happens in your classes?

I show people that it doesn't have to be super complicated to put healing, healthy, delicious food in your mouth. It just requires being stocked with some great essentials and knowing how to work with those essentials. And people have *fun*.

You teach classes in "seed-to-table" cuisine. What does that mean?

Seed-to-table cooking is a celebration of the earth's bounty. It's about creating recipes from what you just picked from the garden or what the farmer just harvested. It's about walking through the organic farm or garden and letting the beauty and the bounty inspire you, then taking that happy feeling into the kitchen and cooking up something luscious.

What are the benefits?

You know your food. You follow the chain of the food from the ground to your mouth. You understand its origin, its quality and its potency.

Why is local food important?

Local is the most fresh you can get, and there's nothing tastier. Plus, fresh is more nutritious. Also—and this is important—buying local supports local farms.

And why organic? Organic is essential when you're looking at the highest good and the bigger picture. If you poison the soil, you poison the planet and you poison yourself. That's common sense.

Cook with the Organic Gourmet

Leslie Cerier teaches classes at eco-spas and resorts around the world. This spring you'll find her at:

Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health

Stockbridge, Massachusetts
March 2-4

Rancho La Puerta

Tecate, Baja California, Mexico
March 10-17

Esalen Institute

Big Sur, California
March 18-23, March 23-25

OSM ONLINE → Find an extended version of this interview and the recipe for Leslie Cerier's delicious nori rolls at organicspamagazine.com/leslie-cerier.



Leslie's Pantry

Leslie's staples are made with wild-harvested and organic ingredients.

Bob's Red Mill whole grains, whole grain flours and nut flours, including gluten-free products. bobsredmill.com

Frontier Natural Products Co-op Fair Trade – certified organic herbs, spices, extracts, flax seeds and sea vegetables. frontiercoop.com

Lotus Foods exotic heirloom varieties of organic certified rice. lotusfoods.com

Maine Coast Sea Vegetables organic dulse, kombu, kelp, wild nori, alaria, sea vegetable snacks and seasonings. seaveg.com

Navitas Naturals organic cacao butter, paste and powder; goji berries; maca powder; coconut oil; hempseeds and more. navitasnaturals.com

Nutiva organic hemp seeds, hemp oil and coconut oil. nutiva.com

Selina Naturally Celtic, Hawaiian and Portuguese sea salts, olive oil, ghee, nut and seed butters. celticseasalt.com

Shiloh Farms organic grains, beans, dried fruits, nuts, seeds and sweeteners. shilohfarms.com

South River Miso organic, aged misos. southrivermiso.com

Lemon-Parsley Dressing

This light, refreshing dressing is great on green salads, coleslaw, steamed vegetables and cooked grains.

Makes about 1¼ cups

6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 ½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
 1½ cups parsley leaves
 2 scallions (white and green parts)
 1 tablespoon chopped green bell pepper
 1 clove garlic
 ½ teaspoon sea salt

Put all ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth and creamy. Taste and adjust seasonings if desired.



Lemony Quinoa Salad with Toasted Sunflower Seeds

With its bright, sprightly flavors, this is a wonderful springtime dish. To make the sunflower seeds more easily digestible, soak them overnight.

Serves 6 to 8

3¾ cups water
 ½ teaspoon sea salt
 2½ cups quinoa, rinsed
 1 cup raw sunflower seeds
 ¾ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
 ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Bring water and salt to a boil in a medium-size saucepan. Add quinoa, lower heat, cover and simmer for about 15 minutes, until all water is absorbed. Transfer quinoa to a large bowl and let cool to room temperature.

Meanwhile, toast sunflower seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat, stirring often, for 3 to 5 minutes, until they are aromatic and start to pop. Add sunflower seeds, lemon juice and oil to quinoa and stir until well combined. Taste and adjust seasonings if desired.

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