

Cooking up a storm

The boys are doing alright too, particularly when it comes to kitchen prowess



Type in 'teenager cooking' into a standard photographic search library and the results are interesting. Among the many hundreds of suggestions, a vast majority depict girls rustling up a treat, which points to the fact that cooking is still seen as a specialty of the female half of the population.

'Cooking is very much in vogue,' counters Carola Weymouth, founder of Cookie Crumbles. 'Celebrities such as Heston Blumenthal and Jamie Oliver have paved the way for making cooking an exciting and profitable, if hard working, career. We have a situation where 90% of top chefs are male.'

Cookie Crumbles is just one of a host of cookery schools in London, offering a range of classes for toddlers through to teenagers. Another is The Kids Kitchen, run by Londoner Nicole Freeman. 'People tend to assume that girls have a more natural affinity with cooking, but I have a lot of boys who come to my classes who are super keen chefs,' she says. 'Given the age of my protégés, my aim is a bit more short-term: if we let boys enjoy their time in the kitchen, and teach them about food and where it comes from, we will lay a solid foundation for a love of cooking in the future.'

Both companies offer a range of classes, from your standard introduction to cooking, through to the more elaborate. Via Cookie Crumbles, for example, Carola offers Indian and knife skill classes, where she says the uptake is '50-50' boys to girls.

What's apparent is the divide that used to exist between traditional boys and girls subjects has been broken down – maybe those photographic libraries need a little freshening up too.

✦ To find out more about The Kids Kitchen and Cookie Crumbles, visit thekidskitchen.net and cookiecrumbles.co.uk